

THE
PROVIDENCE
OF GOD.

In sudden Death ordinary and extraordinary
vindicated and improved.

In a funeral SERMON for Mrs. MARY REVE,
Wife to Mr. NICHOLAS REVE,
Merchant.

First preached to the English Church in ROTTERDAM,
January 14. 1685. and since enlarged.

By JOSEPH HILL B. D.



At ROTTERDAM,
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T H E

PROVIDENCE

O F G O D

displayed and improved

BY JOSEPH HILL, M.D.

AT ROTTERDAM

PRINTED BY J. J. VAN DIJK

M D C C L X X V

Frank R. Brown 1986/30/25

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T O
RICHARD HUNTINGTON

Esquire.

SIR,

THis Sermon which I preached for your daughter's sake, out of my respects to her, and supposal of this office for her had she died with you, I now send you enlarged and printed. Not for any solicitations, which is the usual modest excuse, although I wanted not these from some Gentlemen in her late condition: but because I have not seen this subject, notwithstanding the many occasions thereof, handled by any, tho it may be by some, and I not know it. And especially, because God's providence which is as the soul in the world's body, ruling and acting all things in it, is frequently misunderstood by many. Some not only complaining when their expectations are crost, as Cato did, of its darknes and obscurity, and saying with Brutus, that vertue is but nomen inane, an empty name, when they see such things befall the vertuous: but are even ready with Epicurus to deny it altogether, because of its seeming irregularity. Others reading the many temporal promises in the Old Testament, mostly relating to the Jews, and some to particular persons, as David, or such places of Scripture, as Psalm 91, are apt to judge providence to be so far from fulfilling the word, that it is contrary to it; and being not able to reconcile them, are greatly staggered and perplexed. I have therefore cast in my mite of endeavors to reconcile God's word with his works, in this one branch of sudden death, for satisfaction therein: and from that ordinary in the Text and example taken occasion since, instead of most of those extraordinary in Scripture, for the better

better illustrating thereof, and this kind of providence both in general and particular, in infants as well as aged, by reason of the little one we have also lost. The blessing of heaven accompany is for good to those that peruse it, that God may have the glory of his truth and faithfulness in his word, and of equity and righteousness in his works. For your selfe, Sir, I am sensible what a full and home blow God hath reacht you, in cutting down tree and fruit together: the loss of such a daughter with a grandson is great, but it is the will of your heavenly Father, to which I hope you have learnt to submit. You might perhaps have been better satisfied, if she had died by you, rather than at this distance; but tho' Rebekah like she left her native country, and Father's house, yet not God's, nor without his especial providence, who sets the solitary in families, and fixes the bounds of our habitations. And here she liv'd beloved, and died lamented, and tho' she is buried in the dust, yet not in oblivion: all which to her is indeed fruitless, yet may somewhat alleviate your sorrow, that she was amongst those that valed her worth. That this sharp affliction may be sanctified so that you may make the best improvement thereof, and that the blessed Spirit, which is stiled the Comforter, may comfort you and all concerned therein, is the prayer of

S I R,

Your Servant in the Lord.

J. H.

GOD'S PROVIDENCE

in sudden death vindicated and
improved.

GENESIS xxxv. vers. 19.

*And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath,
which is Bethlehem.*



*I*acob's life, as most of God's eminent servants, was made up of providences, all in chequer-work: being a mixture of mercies and miseries, for the most part successively, and some times joynly, throughout his pilgrimage. And is more particularly described, than any of the saints of God, in Scripture; he being the root of the future Church, which God more regards, then all the great Kingdoms of the world; that are therefore past over in silence, whilst poore *Jacob* with his staf and travels, family and flocks, remaine upon record to all generations. That as *Abraham* and *Isaac*, so he especially might be a patterne to his posterity: whose servitude, sufferings and increase in *Egypt*, resembled his in *Syria*; their being pursued at their coming thence, with all their litle ones and great riches, his by *Laban*; and their passage to, and abode in Canaan, and after going into captivity, his in many things, and going in's old age into *Egypt*. But not to them only, being now written for the instruction of us Gentiles also, on whom the ends of the world are come: and is as all particular histories, most profitable for all, tho' generall may be more pleasing to many, *Rom. 15: 4. 1 Cor. 10: 11.* Let us therefore view a little the variety of God's dealings with this blessed Patriarch, that in this Chapter lead to the text. Wherby we may see, how God freed him from his feares, that he and all his should be destroyed;

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by calling him to *Bethel*, discouraging his enemies, and bringing him safely thither to pay his vows, which the good man had too long neglected, *v. 1--7*. But tho' this removal from his owne dwelling to God's house, made a comfortable change, yet he soon meets with an alteration, for *Deborah* a grave and pious matron, his mothers nurse, and his deare friend dies there, and is buried with great lamentation, *v. 8*. Which the God of all consolations, who usually knits his comforts to his people's crosses, lets him not long proceed in; but cloths him afresh with the garments of praise, by appearing to him againe, changing his name from *Jacob* to *Israel*, and making great promises to him and his seed, *v. 9--15*. But this glorious day of grace is followed with a very dark night of providence, in the death of his most beloved *Rachel*: which yet was not without the appearance of a bright star in the firmament of the Church, by the birth of a 12th Patriarch, his mothers *Benoni*, but his fathers *Benjamin*. From all which we may gather, *There's no expecting constant prosperity for Gods people on earth; mercies without miseries are reserved for heaven.*

Being now come to the paragraft of *Rachel's* death, which I have chosen as suitable to our Sister's departed, let none stop me with her father's speech to *Jacob* concerning her, *It must not be so done in our countrey, Gen. 29: 26*. For tho' I will not say, as some doe, that the want of funeral sermons makes funeral sorrows so small amongst us: yet this I must and will say, that all are too apt to run into extreams, and either despise the chastening of the Lord, or faint when they are rebuked of him, *Hebr. 12: 5*. And therefore whatsoever may tend to remedy this, is not onely seasonable, but very needfull. I know at the reformation of these Churches, when the generallity of Magistrates and Ministers prevaild for this settlement (tho' Prince *William* and some others were *Lutherans*) and this amongst other things of funeral sermons was ventilated; they were not judged necessary at the interment: there being neither precept, nor precedent in Scripture for more, than decent buriall with lamentations; nor any reason why they should not be made, for the godly poore of exemplary lives and deaths; as well as the rich, whose purses generally procure them. Yet upon occasions it was judged very necessary on the Lord's day or in weekly lectures, to admonish the living of their mortality, direct the sorrowfull Relations in their duty,

duty, and stir up all to imitate laudable examples. and prepare for following those departed in the faith. Seeing then it is not material, whether we have the corps in a coffin before our eyes, according to the custome in *England*, or it be coverd with earth, as here; so that we have but the Deceased's life and death in our minds and memories for our betterment; I shall proceed to shew you, the agreeableness of this portion of Scripture, to the present occasion.

Vers. 16. Shews, where *Jacob* and his family were, viz. but a litle way from *Eprath*, whither they were going. [*How exactly doth God in his providence set the bounds of journeys as well as habitations; the places and times of our lives and deaths.*] And what befel them there. *Rachel* travailed and had hard labor. *The best of women may have the bitterest pains in child-birth, and the saddest remembrance of God's sentence; In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children.* Gen. 3: 16. *Vers. 17.* The midwife encourages her in her pains and fears, with having another son, i.e. besides *Joseph* she had already. But all in vaine, she regards it not, as in the like case *Phineas* wife, 1 Sam. 4: 20. [*Earthly comforts signify little to dying persons*] *Vers. 18.* *Rachel*, who was not satisfied with *Joseph* alone, but desired another son, Gen. 30: 24. now when she heareth him call him *Ben-oni*, the son of my sorrow. It is dangerous not to rest contented with our present enjoyments. When we desire creature comforts immoderately, God may grant them so that they not only prove comfortles, but bitternes to us. Numb. 11: 4, 33. and Ps. 78: 29, 30, 31. The time when she thus named him was, as her soule was in departing; whereby her death, as all others, is set forth to us, which the following words, *for she died*, declare. *Souls die not with our bodies.* They goe to God that gave them, to be judged by him, Eccles. 12: 7. The union of our souls and bodies being life, and their parting againe, death, 1 Kings, 17: 21, 22. therefore dying *Stephen* prays, Lord *Jesus* receive my spirit. Act. 7: 59. But *Jacob* lest that name should be a continual renovation of his sorrow, calls him *Ben-jamin* the son of the right hand, denoting his affection to him. Ps. 80: 17. *It is wisdom to suit names to occasional providences.*

Vers. 19. In the Text we have, I. *Rachel's* death. II. Burial. III. Place of both.

I. *Rachel* died. Beautiful *Rachel*, *Jacob's* dearly beloved *Rachel* dies, whilst beare-eyed *Leah* lives. The more we love any creature, person or thing, the more danger we are into lose it. God often times crossing our

inordinate affections for our good, in taking away our beloved comforts, and sparing those that are despised. *Rachel*, that so passionately desired children, that she said unto *Jacob*, give me children, or else I die, *Gen.* 30: 1. now dies by having them. *Our immoderate desires many times cost us very deare.*

II. *And was buried.* The most beloved alive, when they are dead, we desire to have buried out of our sight. as *Abraham* said of *Sarah*, *Gen.* 23: 4. *A decent burial of the dead is the living Relations duty.* Yea sometimes memorials of the deceased may be expedient, when free from ostentation and superstition, as we see in the following verse, *Jacob* lets a pillar upon her grave, as a standing monument of his affection and her desert.

III. *In the way to Ephrath, which is Beth-lehem.* Renowned for our Savior's birth; called *Beth-lehem Ephratah*, *Micah* 5: 2. and of *Judea*, *Math.* 2: 1, 5, 6. to distinguish it from that in *Galilee*; and the city of *David*, *Luke* 2: 4 *John* 7: 42. for his birth and education (as *Zion* was for his building and habitation, *2 Sam.* 5: 7; 9. &c.) which is by interpretation, *a house of bread*, and so most fitting for Christ's birth, who was the Son of *David* according to the flesh, and the true bread of life, as he inculcates at least 7 times on one occasion, *John* 6. About a mile (as some say that have seen the place) short of this *Beth-lehem*, *Rachel* dies in the way: distant from her own and husbands friends, in an unsettled condition, without habitation. [*We all may know where we were born, but none knows where or in what condition they shall die.*] And is there buried. [*If we live the life and die the death of the righteous, it matters not much where we are buried: nor at what distance from the rest of our friends.*] How delicate soever the body may be, the carcas is not curious, in what bed of dust it sleeps; and the souls of Gods people, find as neare a way to heaven, from any one place upon earth as other. Many superstitious people now adays, would think themselves happy, to die so neare *Beth-lehem*, that they might be buried there. But *Jacob* well knew, that burial places are not of religious consideration: but any fit place pointed out by providence, might serve well enough for the best of his family. Tho he, and his son *Joseph* likewise that died in *Egypt*, would have their body and bones buried in *Canaan*; yet that was to testify their dying in the faith of God's promise of that land to their posterity, and to assure them of their return thither; and therefore is otherwise of no consideration

ration to us. It is but of later times that any were buried in Churches or cities but allways abroad; as all scripture, and other Histories, and laws also witnes. When the opinion of Purgatory and holines of places prevailed, at first men would be buried nigh the Churches, that they might be remembered in the prayers and oblations of those that met there, and afterwards in them, becaule they thought them more sacred; which tho opposed by * many laws, civil and Ecclesiastical, and writers ancient and modern; by some, as an innovation, others as superstitious, and many as dangerous to the health of the living, especially in times and places of infection; yet all in vaine, the tyrant custom hath so prevailed, that its grown too strong for all contradiction.

But I have deteyned you too long from that I chiefly designe: which is not so much to speake of death and mortality, as such a surprising death as this Scripture speaks of, clearly to the occasion, and to vindicate God's providence therein, and shew what improvement we should make thereof,

D. God takes from us our dearest Relations and creature comforts, sometimes suddenly when we least expect it and want them most.

That God the Author of life and death, and all other mercies and miseries, doth deprive his best servants, as well as others indifferently, of their greatest earthly comforts, is most apparent by this and other Scriptures, *Eccles. 8: 14. 9: 2.* And that he doth this sometimes with most imbittering circumstances; not only suddenly but unexpectedly also (which makes the providence more grievous especially at present, as the sudden death of younger friends not expected is harder borne, than that of aged, having been expected long) and at such times, as these comforts are most wanted (whereby their loss becomes a continued affliction, and matter of constant grief afterwards) is also most evident by this history, and many others I need not mention, seeing the experience of all ages attest it. For what Saint alive then or now so deare to God as *Jacob*? what Relation so neare as a wife? and what wife so beloved of a husband as *Rachel*? for whom he served a 7 years apprenticeship and how hard soever it was, they seemd to him but a few days for the love he had to her, *Gen. 29: 20.* Yet notwithstanding God takes away from him this desire of his eyes, with a sudden and unexpected stroke: as he did after from the prophet *Ezekiel*, *c. 24. v. 16.* For

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* *V. Durantus de ritib. Ecclesia, l. 1. c. 23. Gerhardus de morte. 5. 78 -- 88.*

she had not gon her ful time with child: as may be gatherd from their removal from *Bethel* and traveling towards their father *Isaac's* house in *Hebron*; which in common prudence they would not have done, if they had expected her coming in labor, before they could have reached thither. And was in a place of no accommodation, being in the way nigh *Ephraim*, before they could reach it, surpris'd with her pangs, and must stay there, whether in house or tent is not mentioned; then which, for a woman of her quality and estate, nothing could be less expected. Moreover this being her second child, it might be hoped in reason had she gon her full time, she might with as much or more safety bring forth this than her former son; in regard the first birth is usually the most dangerous, and the fruit of the womb, like that of the trees, is easily gatherd when com to maturity. Yet God that hath all persons, times and places in his power, brings her presently here not only to pas through the valley of the shadow of death, as all women doe in travail, but also through the gates of death it selfe, dashing all their hopes of her safety: and good *Jacob*, tho very sorrowful no doubt, is silent at it, not once complaining the least that we read of, because he knew, it was his heavenly father's pleasure. Tho it was also at such a time, as made his wound the deeper, this befalling him when he had most need of her; for his present solace in his afflictions, from his childrens miscarriage and other crosses; and future comfort in his old age, his elder children being ready to marry and leave him; and for the helping him in the education of *Joseph*, and especially *Benjamin* now borne to them. For as no earthly comforts are so great as those of man and wife, or more alleviate their troubles from others; so no nurse for a husband like his wife, nor for children like their own mother.

I have been the larger in these circumstances, because they set out history to the life, and correspond most of them to the occasion (our deceased Sister having come in travail before her time, died of her second son &c.) and to my designe, of speaking to such a death as is in the text, suitable to the example before us.

Reasons of these kind of providences are many; which I shall now proceed to handle: taking it for granted all along amongst Christians, that it is God that doth all these things by his over-ruling providence, as Scripture every where declares. But shall pas over most of the *Effici-*

one causes, that are well known; the *Principal*; as God's being our *sovereign Lord*, and therefore may so deale with any of us sinners; and his *will and pleasure*, which is so to deale with som, as we see; as also because he is infinitely *wise*, knowing what things most conduce to his glory and our good, and how by his *Power* to use them, as well as work them, for these ends; and *3^d or righteous in all his ways*; and *Holy in all his works*; and *Good* also, yea very *Mercifull*; his *tender mercies are over all his works*, *Pf. 145: 9. and 17.* Every of which, and much more all of them serve to silence us, and teach us submission: tho we know not how to reconcile these concurring causes, in many particular occurrences. And the *Instrumental* causes, as Angels, men, and other creatures, imployed by God herein, actively commanding them, or permissively suffering them to execute his pleasure, always powerfully limiting, ordering, and over-ruling them, so that he is to be eyed and owned in all that befalls us, *Job. 1.* And shall only speak of the *Impulsive* causes, wherein the maine difficulty lies, and afterwards of the *Final*

I. The *meritorious cause* of these and all other punishments is sin, for which the *justice* of God inflicts them. Sin being the transgression of Gods law; and death the punishment threatned on all mankind for the same; every death must needs be a punishment; seeing it is the execution of the threatening, and the destruction of the sinner. And much more that which is sudden, this circumstance being an aggravation thereof, as appears by its being as such denounced *Deutr. 7: 4. 1 Sam. 2: 31. Is. 29: 5. and 30: 13. Prov. 6: 15. and 29: 1. executed Job. 22: 16 and 36: 14. Pf. 37: 2. Ecclesi. 7: 17. 1 Thes. 5: 3. bewailed Jer. 4: 20 and 6: 26. imprecated Pf. 55: 16 and deprecated as such Pf. 102: 25.* The *Pelagians* indeed of old (as the *Socinians* of late) denyed mans mortality to be the effect of his sin, affirming it to arise from his natural constitution at the first: but were generally opposed therein, and refuted by the *Orthodox*, as *Councils, Fathers, and Histories* both general and of them particularly written by many * do declare. It having been the constant opinion both of the ancient Jews and Christians, that every kind of death was the punishment of sin, as the learned *Grotius de satisfactione*, assures us. I confess many of our Divines writing against the Popish opinion of humane satisfaction to divine justice, by sufferings in this

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* *Alvaret, Lains, Vosius, Jansenius, Norris.*

life and purgatory afterwards, granting *death* to be a punishment, *per se* & *natura sua*, * do yet deny it to be properly so, to those whose sins are pardoned through Christ: distinguishing the afflictions of this life and death also, into chastisements of the righteous and punishments of the wicked. But Scripture is not so nice, calling those that befall the righteous punishments sometimes. *Ezra* 9: 13; *Ier.* 30: 11. and 46: 28. *Lament* 3: 39. *Amos* 3: 2. and sometimes those that befall the wicked chastisements. *Levit.* 26: 28. *Deutr.* 1: 2, 3. *Pf.* 94: 10. *Ier.* 30: 14. Nor doe I well understand, how that which is in it selfe and owne nature a punishment, should ever be otherwise: tho it com from different causes, I know, and is used for different ends and effects: or how tho afflictions may be chastisements to the righteous whilst they live, their death can be so to them; and much les how that of Infants, which make so great a part of mankind, and if of believing parents are charitably judged by most, (and I would be glad to see well proved) are righteous and saved; for the Apostle makes it the effect of Adams transgression, and therefore properly a punishment, *Rom.* 5: 12, 13, 14. *1 Cor.* 15: 21, 22. And therefore that distinction also used by *Dally* and others, that death to the righteous is only *materially* or improperly a punishment not *formally*; as the cutting or burning a patient by a Phisitian differs from the like inflicted out of Justice by a Judge on an offender; seems not consonant to the Apostle's doctrine, seeing death is inflicted by the law-giver for the breach of his law, whereas a Patient suffers not as a malefactor.

It is true, that neither death nor any other punishments of the Righteous, are meerly vindictive in reference to satisfaction for sin, as the Papists maintaine: Christ having fully satisfied for their sins, and procured the pardon of them, which upon their believing is granted them by the covenant of grace; but not so as to free them from the temporal evils of this life; or death and their bodies lying in the dust, these being excepted after the promise of the Messias, *Gen.* 3. For God having given man a law, and threatned his transgressing it with death (which implies the temporal of the body, the spiritual of the soul, and the eternal of both) our first parents, comprehending all man-kind, having transgressed it; God comes and holds Assizes, summons them to appear before him, charges them with their sin, convinces them of their guiltines, and then allaying the

* *Dallaus de penis.*

severity of his Justice with Mercy and free Grace; first promiseth a *Messias*, and Salvation and deliverance through him from their Sins, by his satisfaction to Justice for them, so as he had determined, and after agreed with *Christ* the seed of the Woman, in the Covenant of Redemption: so that though they, and all in them had Sinned and come short of the Glory of God, being Spiritually dead in Trespasses and Sins, and thereby liable to eternal Death, yet they and all their righteous Seed should be Saved by the *Messias*, from these two kinds of Death, which are the great destructive penalties of Sinners. And then proceeds to *Sentence* them; what they should all suffer notwithstanding: First the Woman who was first in fault, declaring her peculiar Punishment as to her Sex, besides those common to her with Man; in her sorrowful Conception, bringing forth, and subjection to her Husband; and then the Man, and all mankind in him, both Men and Women, are sentenced to Misery, in this Life mortality, and their Bodies lying in the dust from whence they were taken: The Promise, and its preceding the Sentence implying, that all those that embraced God's Mercy through the *Messias* should have no other Punishment then these temporal; and all those that rejected it, and so remaining on their first terms with their Creator, commonly call'd *The Covenant of Works*, should suffer the Death threatned therein for their Transgressions. The *Execution* of this Sentence hath continued ever since, and will continue till the Resurrection; that all may feel the bitter fruits of their Apostacy, in these temporal Punishments; for the bettering of God's People, not for their satisfying Justice for their Sins (as the Papists affirm) seeing they neither can, (no meer Man, much less Sinful, being able to satisfy divine Justice for the least offence) nor have need, Christ having done this sufficiently for them; and for the leaving the incorrigible Wicked, that will not be bettered by them, the more inexcusable, in their suffering Eternal Punishment. So that those metaphorical expressions of Pardon of Sins, by God's *not seeing or remembering them, blotting them out, covering them, casting them behind his back, and into the bottom of the Sea, &c.* denoting the plenariness thereof; and those sayings of our Divines, *remissa culpa, remittitur poena*, and that Justification takes away all Punishment, &c. must be understood according to the Covenant of Grace, and agreeably with the execution of God's sentence upon Sinners. For thō remissi-

on of Sin, be nothing else then the remission of its puishment; yet its that punishment only which is opposite to pardon, such as belongs to the impenitent, and is Eternal; whereas all those whom God justifies, he also glorifies. Inasmuch that tho the righteous have through Christ the remission of their Sins and eternal Punishment granted them in the Covenant of Grace, together with a sanctified use of their temporal, that they shall all work together for their good; and the sting of Death taken out of theirs (Sin that brought it in being now thereby turn'd out again) and victory over the Grave, in the Redemption of their bodies from their Captivity under it, at the Resurrection: yet Death is still, in all the degrees of it antecedent in the miseries of this Life, and kinds of it, first and second, or temporal and eternal *the wages of Sin*, according to the original threatening. And temporal Death a punishment in all, according to the original Sentence: tho the Righteous *Eternal Life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ their Lord: who hath abolish'd Death*, or Sin, which is Spiritual Death, and Eternal the consequent thereof, tho not their Temporal, *and brought Life and Immortality to light by the Gospel*, from the first promise of himself, still more clearly, and by himself at last most fully, to whom be Glory. *Rom. 6: 23. 2 Tim. 1: 10.*

2. The causes or reasons of the *Adjuncts* of Death, in the kinds, manner, and other circumstances thereof, as why some die a violent, others a natural Death, these suddenly, those leisurely, one sooner, another later, or at such times or places rather than others, are in the ordinary course of Providence, of which we speak, secret to us, tho well known to the all-wise God. There being such a stupendious variety herein, that as in living faces, so in dying persons, there's no perfect agreement in all circumstances: each of which are particularly and only known to him, who numbers the hairs of our heads, and so orders and governs every single person and thing, as if it were all he had to do, and so all things, as if he were not employed in any particulars. The Apostle gives us the clearest account hereof, that I know, in few words, saying, *God worketh all things after the Counsel of his own Will, Ephes. 1: 11.* where we have counsel directing, will determining, and power working or executing all things: so that as he hath right by Creation, and continual preservation of all his Creatures, to govern them as he pleases; so his understanding being infinite, his will just, and his power

er almighty, his government in all he doth; must needs be most excellently perfect. But *who hath known the mind of the Lord, or been his counsellor*, and acquainted with his secrets? for which reason we should with the Apostle humbly adore them, and not vainly enquire after them, presumptuously prying into those things which belong not to us. *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out, Rom. 11. 33, 34.* But tho we must not be curious to know what we ought not, we must not be careless to know what we ought: Scripture frequently requiring us to observe God's dealings, encouraging us thereto, and condemning the neglect thereof. Let us therefore proceed more particularly, and for the understanding these riddles of Gods Providence, plow with his Heifer the Sacred Scriptures; wherein we have a multitude of examples for our instruction, and rules also for our direction, that we may wisely consider his doings, as we are commanded.

These kinds and manner of Death are considerable in reference to God, the *persons that Die*, and the *Living* that survive. As they come from God, so they are in themselves Punishments for the breach of his law; but very different in their causes and effects, according to the diversity of the subjects they are inflicted upon, or that are therein concern'd; which we must carefully regard, lest we dangerously mistake. For which end we must consider.

I. That as all God's glorious Attributes whereby he is pleased to display himselfe are equally in him, so those that relate to his government are alwayes jointly, though unequally exercised in his works in this world, even those that to us seem most opposite, as his Mercy and Justice, which are singly exercised in the world to come. Even the Devils have some Mercy and Patience mixt with Justice at present: being reserved in chains as malefactors unto Judgment for greater Punishments; who yet feel so great, that they believe and tremble for fear of their future, *Jude 6. James 2: 19.* And in the greatest severity towards Men, God in wrath remembers some Mercy, even to the worst that he suddenly destroys (besides the remnant that he saves) in warning them before, delaying till their iniquities be full, and mitigating their Punishment in taking them away; none suffering to the utmost here, nor none so much hereafter as they

should had they lived longer, to treasure up more Sins against the day of Wrath, as the old World, *Sodom and Gomorrah*, the *Amorites, Amalakites*, and many others. But though Justice be very apparently the chief reason of some Punishments, especially those extraordinary, commonly called *Judgements*, and such as are general: yet for the most part, especially in particular and ordinary cases, God hath many other reasons, and greater than that we imagine. some of which (though unknown at present) are yet well known afterwards. If not here, to be sure hereafter; when we shall see a distinct exercise of those Attributes that here are mixt; so that there will be no Atheists or Unbelievers of Gods Justice in Hell; nor no mistakes of Gods Judgment and Mercies in Heaven. In the mean time from this manifold Wisdom of God, and the mixture of causes joyntly acting in this Life, we may see the fundamental ground of our mistaking Gods dealings with us here; and learn to take heed, that we separate not those reasons which appears not to us, from those which seem most apparent, and so divide, where we should only distinguish; which often arises from our narrow conceptions of the great and holy God and his ways, judging of him too often by our selves, tho he hath told us *that his thoughts and ways are not ours, but as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are his thoughts and ways higher than ours*, in Pardoning the Penitent which is the choicest of Mercies, however they be otherwise dealt with in this World. *Isa. 55. 7, 8, 9.* So that though we must take notice of Gods Justice in all Punishments, acknowledging our Sins to have deserved greater; yet not only, and as separate from his goodness and Mercy (which may be greater therein, for any thing we know, though not so manifest at present) lest we mistake the Righteous God, in these his judicial dispensations, *Lam. 3: 18--26.*

In the next place, let's consider the dying Persons themselves; and they are either Righteous or Wicked, there being no middle state; and consequently their Death is an entrance into their future Happiness, or Misery. Now in regard we cannot judge of the Spiritual and Eternal condition of those that die suddenly, but by their lives; for us to conclude either way of them (as is too customary) from the manner of Death, seeing all these externals fall alike to all, is great uncharitableness on the one hand, or gross presumption on the other. To be

be sure if they belong to God, it is more in Mercy to them than in Justice, as in freeing them from the fear of Death, that King of Terrors, as *Job* calls it; or future backslidings, and loss of God's Favour, which is worse to God's People than Death it self, his loving kindness to them being better than Life; or taking them away from the evil to come, and many other ways unknown to us. And is more eligible to those prepared, then a lingring, in regard of its end, and for a greater good, as the sudden cutting off an Arm or a Leg to save the Life; so that the Apostle groand, *earnestly desiring it, not for that he would be unclothed* or desired only to die, but for its consequences, *that Mortality might be swallowed up of Life*, *2 Cor. 5. v. 4.* Though to the wicked or unprepared, this circumstance is a sad aggravation, as I suggested before; and the best of God's Servants in the want of Assurance cry with *David* to God, *O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence*: yet to them there is more fear than danger; their great and blessed Physitian so mixing the poyson of Death with stronger ingredients, that sometimes are cordials to comfort them, and always means to cure them perfectly of all their and Sins Miseries; so that Death in general, of what kind soever is reckoned amongst the priviledges of Believers, in subordination to their future Glory, *1. Cor. 3. 22.*

As to the surviving, the Death of Relations and Friends in what manner soever, is to be accounted an Affliction in the general; but very different many ways, according to the qualifications of the Dead and Living, their nearness in Relation, dearness in Affection, kindness, and other circumstances aggravating or extenuating the loss; and according to their future use, both as to Temporal and Spiritual good, and their being Sanctified accordingly, or otherwise not improved. But herein we must not judge by Sence, but by the light of God's Word, weighing them in the ballance of the Sanctuary; for Sence is altogether for present enjoyments, and suggests nothing but bitterness and sorrow in their loss; crying out continually, can there be Mercy in such an Affliction as this? can I gather grapes off these thorns, or figs off these thistles? These are like *Samson's* riddles to Sence, unanswered, but by Scripture, rectified Reason and Experience are unfolded, so that the *Wise, that will observe, shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord. Ps. 107. 43.* According as the deceased were,

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or in moral probability might have been, if publick Persons, Blessings or Judgements to the Church or State, or if private, helps or hindrances, or comforts or crosses, in regard of Heavenly or Earthly things, more or less to us, so we should account their Death at present, and afterwards according to the Spiritual benefits we reap, or might have reaped thereby. As good Magistrates and Ministers that were, and might have been more useful Instruments of publick good, being cut off suddenly, as *Josia* and *Stephen* were greatly lamented; and *Absolom* and the Prophets of *Baal* that were quite contrary, their being slain was accounted accordingly. And not judge by our affection to them, which is many times inordinate, or theirs to us, which we often prize and rely on too much; for though the cross thereby becomes the heavier to us, yet more necessary for us; so that the Wise and Holy God designing our good, bleeds us in the right vein, to cure us and bring us nearer to himself. As he did *Jacob* here in *Rachel*, and afterwards in *Joseph*; and *David* even after he had pronounced by *Nathan* his Sin Pardoned, Punishing him for the same, not only for his Spiritual but Temporal benefit also; by taking away his Child by *Bathsheba*, which would have been a perpetual reproach both to him and Religion; and his beloved *Absolom*, whom he so laments, thereby restoring him to his Kingdom, and that to him, and both to Peace.

But it is high time that we draw down these considerations to our present purpose. And first in the Death of Infants, there's the manifestation of the truth of God's Threatnings, and his Justice in executing his Sentence against Mankind for their first Transgression; but whether it's more in Mercy or Judgement to them, we know not, and therefore not the reason why these more than others die so soon, and oftentimes suddenly, but must acquiesce in the Pleasure of the All-wise God. If they be such as belong to the Kingdom of Heaven, it's many ways Mercy, in freeing them from the Sins and Miseries of this Life, and making them sooner Happy with Himself: If not, there's yet some Mercy mixt with Justice, their Punishment being less in the other World. And we have less reason to doubt of Mercy for Infants, who die before they have done any good or evil Personally, than for those that have done much evil; seeing God promised Christ to mankind before he past the Sentence of Mortality; but especially for those
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born of Believers that are within the Covenant, and stiled Holy in Scripture. For they are not only capable of Happyness, as well as Aged Persons (their Souls being alike, and no such incapacity as here will be in their Bodies hereafter) but also of Adoption, and Justification through Christ, and conformity to Him, which are the absolutely requisite means thereof; tho' not of actual Believing, I think, notwithstanding the *Lutheran*, and some others assert it; unnecessarily in my Opinion, because it's only of absolute necessity to those of years, that are partakers of the outward dispensation of the Covenant, but not in it self; in regard that Believing, and the Gospel believed, and outward Ordinances, are not substantial parts of our Righteousness, but only accidental means thereof, according to the capacity of the Subject. Besides this we may observe, God useth not to send any extraordinary Judgements, only for Original Sin, and confutes *Jonah* with this Argument of his Clemency towards *Nineveh*, that there were more than sixscore thousand Persons therein that could not discern between their right hand and their left; the Parents, for whose Punishment the Children are often taken away, and in general Judgements with them, having now Repented. Though we have examples of their slaughter, not only for their Fathers Sin, but for peculiar reasons and ends. As the *Egyptians* drowning the *Israelites* male Children; God therein letting forth their Wrath, to Praise him, and try his People, whom he had promis'd to multiply; making this there last and greatest Tryal, (as is usual) before Deliverance, and an occasion of manifesting his Justice and Power in Punishing the Offenders in the same kind; both in destroying their first Born (whereby also he fulfilled his threatning, and forced them to let *Israel* his first Born goe, laden with their spoils, through hopes they would return) and also by drowning *Pharaoh* and his host, thereby also fulfilling his Promise to his People. Like as afterwards the *Babylonians*, who in many things resembled the *Egyptians*, in their carriage towards the Church, had their cruelty justly retallated on their own little ones, *Pf.* 137. 8, 9.

But however Infants be cut off, whether by the hand of violence (as the *Bethlemitish* by *Herod*, *Math.* 2. prefigured as the Prophet *Jeremiah* declar'd) or by Natural Death, it's a Punishment to their Parents and Relations, the manner only augmenting it. And not only a Punishment, but the greatest for kind, of all Temporals that befall the living,

living, (Children being their greatest earthly Blessings) and greater or less in degree, according to circumstances; as the *mourning for an only Son*, and *bitterness for the first born*, justly exceeds that where other Sons, and that for other Children, by which the sorrow for Sin is set forth, *Zach. 12. 10.* But tho' this proceeds from Justice for Sins past, yet more from love, when Sanctified to the Parents, both for their greater future good, which in part they shall know hereafter, and happily for the preventing greater evils than they can ever know. Because they neither know how their Children might prove, or how their own hearts might be tempted, or perplex by them. For tho' we always hope the best, yet frequently we find the contrary; and no bitterer crosses, than from those we expected greatest comfort; Children when young, treading on our skirts, but often when elder, piercing our Hearts. This Punishment is generally inflicted on Mankind; both Children and Parents, besides their Original Sin common to all, for the breach of the second Commandment in their open or heart Idolatry, as is there denounced (to deter Men that are so much concern'd for their Children) as their desert *de jure*, tho' God reserves always liberty to himself *de facto* to dispence his Punishments or favours as he pleases.

Secondly in the sudden Death of those of riper years; where God doth declare in his Word the causes thereof; or manifest them by the *particular ends* and effects, especially joyn'd with clear circumstances; there we may judge of the chief reason or cause, though there be several others concurring; that we may make better use of examples, as Scripture teaches us, *1 Cor 10. 5-10.* Otherwise we must take heed of rushing into God's Secrets, which belong not to us, and only eye the *general ends*, to make use of his Providences accordingly. As where great and crying Sins goe before, and the end is demonstration of Justice, there we may see that's the chief cause, especially in extraordinary Punishments, whereof we have many examples in Scripture. And where also such Sinners are threatned, there also truth appears in their being Punished, as the *Egyptians* first born; *Ahaziah*, *Joram*, *Ahab*, *Jezebel*, &c. So when the Sin is clearly visible in the Death a *Haman's* *Agag's*, and innumerable others that shed Man's Blood, and accordingly have their own unexpectedly shed. Or when destruction follows at the heels of great Sins, as the
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three thousand *Israelites* slain for the molten calf. *Exod. 32.* and while the flesh was between their teeth, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against them, *Numb. 11.* and Herod immediately smitten and eaten of worms, *Acts. 12.* And yet when the vindication of Gods laws and ordinances is manifested to be the end, its hard to say, whether his love to the truth and ordinances of his institution be not the chief reason, tho justice be more discernable; for we must not judge all those that are smitten and destroyed, even by God's immediate hand, to perish eternally. And therefore it is observable, that as God never appeared so terribly, as at the giving the law from mount *Sinai*; so his wrath was never so hot, nor such severity used, as against the first transgressors, to assert the honor of his laws, and make them more regarded afterwards. As in the first idolatry after their promulgation, *Exod. 32: 10.* At the first burnt-offerings, when *Nadab* and *Abihu* offered strange fire, (that is common and not from the altar) there went out fire from the Lord and devoured them, the punishment suting to their sin, *Levit. 10.* As afterwards *Numb. 16.* when *Corah* and others descended from *Levi* endeavoured to make the priesthood common to all the *Levites*, *v. 10.* and *Dathan* and *Abiram* *Reubenites* and others the politick power of *Moses* and the seventy elders, newly established by God (*Ch. xi.*) common with the rest: the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, *v. 32.* and fire from the Lord consumed the two hundred and fifty that offered incense *v. 35.* whose censers God commanded to be used for a sign and memorial thereof. *v. 38.* and 40. and for the peoples murmuring at this dispensation, fourteen thousand and seven hundred of them dyed of the plague. *v. 49.* So when God appoynted the punishment for presumtuoussins, the first offender, the man that gathered sticks on the sabbath day, is by God's appoyntment stoned to death, *Numb. 15.* Thus God vindicated the honour of his ark, with smiting the *Philistines*; and after it's returne above fifty thousand of the men of *Beth-shemesh*, shewing thereby that the ark was the same, tho it had been among the uncircumcised, and the effects of feare were answerable; *1 Sam. c. 5.* and *c. 6.* and after that, *Uzzah* for his rash taking hold of it, tho as seems to us for a good end, for the oxen shook it, so that *David* was affraid, and we may suppose the people much more, *2 Sam. 6.* And thus also God vindicated the honor of Christianity, at the first planting of the Gospel, in smiting *Ananias* and

Sapphira : so that great fears came upon all the Church and upon as many as heard these things, *Acts*. 5.

But where no notorious crimes preceed, and other particular ends than justice appear ; there sudden death is the *Occasion* , and God's love to his truth , and messengers that declare it , or servants that profess or suffer for it , the chief cause and reason thereof. As the widow of *Sarepta*'s son , raised to life by *Elijah* , by which he is acknowledged a man of God , and the word of the Lord in his mouth , truth , *1 Kings* 17. the *Shunammite*'s son by *Elisha* whose miracles resembled his master *Elijah*'s , *2 Kings* 4. So *Lazarus*'s , as Christ declares to the messenger his sisters sent to him , *This sickness is not unto death* (tho in its nature and next end it was , yet not irrevocably as they feared) *but for the glory of God , that the son of God might be glorified hereby* ; intimating that this of *Lazarus* , should be used as a means of glorifying God , and his son in miraculous raising him again to life , and thereby confirming his office of *Messiah* , and Doctrine of the Gospel , as we read it did most eminently , *Jhn.* 11. And the noble army of Martyrs , whom God brings forth , as his Champions for the truth : shewing the power of his grace and their sincerity , that they do not serve God for wordly things , as the devil slanderd *Job* , but love him , their Savior , and his truth above their own lives ; and making their death , which their enemies count ignominious , honourable to him , religion , and themselves ; and using it to quite contrary ends than their persecutors design , namely the increase and confirmation of his Church and people.

I have been the longer upon these extraordinary examples , both to cleare the truth in the general , and the several kinds of sudden death , and also in the ordinary cases , that now follow to be more particularly spoken of. For by a parity of reason , it will follow ; that as God makes different use of like providences , fitting them to different ends , and making them occasions and means of different effects , in wonderful variety according to his infinite wisdom and power ; so he hath accordingly particular reasons that are just and weighty for his dispensations , tho unknown to us , except he discovers them , as his justice in extraordinary punishments for enormous offences , or his goodness , mercy and other causes , when it is otherwise. So that where no sins , or ends and effects more than common , there we are

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not able, nor ought we to judge of God's reason, why these rather than others are suddenly taken away; either by diseases, as apoplexies, convulsions and the like; or by pains as women in travel, or by wars, fire, water and other accidents, these things falling alike to all; for if the kinds of death, or any temporal punishments were infallible signs of God's *hated* and temporal blessings of his *love*, we could never reconcile God's word, we are bound to believe, with the works of providence, which are but the fulfilling of it, and the execution of his purposes. In such cases therefore when God exercises us, as *Job* (who is set forth to us as a pattern of patience in dark providences) prayed *shew me why thou contendest with me* (c. 10.) and waited for the end of the Lord, so should we; God many times dealing with us as Christ said to *Peter*, *what I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter*. As any one hearing *Solomon's* sentence of dividing the child, would have thought it cruelty, if he had gon away without seeing, or after knowing the end and effect: much more may we mistake the Allwise God, if we look on his providence by piece-meals and wait not till we see the issue. For tho' there be sin in all, and that be the only meritorious cause of death, yet that is original sin, that is alike in all from *Adam*, all being equally related to him, so that thence coms no distinction of this or that kind of death, but as most conceive from actual transgressions. Which being not discern'd in infants, who yet die in great variety both in regard of diseases and violent murders, their death is generally laid on their parents, as the widow of *Sarepta* cried to *Elisha*, *art thou come unto me to call my sins to remembrance, and to slay my son?* 1 Kings. 17. For the Jews knew well that God visits the iniquities of the fathers on the children, by many Scriptures threatening it, and examples of it's being executed: and appears particularly in that fearfull imprecation, that *Christ's blood* might be on them and on their children, the fulfilling whereof the whole nation lie under, to their confusion and the confirmation of Christianity, to this day. But we must take heed of applying this alike to all, for where no extraordinary sins God may, and sometimes doth in sovereignty take away children elder or younger, as *Job's*, for tryal and other ends, more than in justice: lest we judge and speake amis of God's dealings with men, as *Job's* friends, and many others are accustomed to doe. For when men see any misery befall any one

out of the common road of providence, having natural conceptions that sin and punishment are related, they presently conclude, that some extraordinary sins either of them or their parents are the procuring cause on their parts, and punitive justice answering to it, on God's part; whereof we have many narratives in Scripture (to which I confine my self) of Barbarians, Jews, and Christians; but I will only mention that in *John. 9.* at present, which hath occasioned most of the thoughts I have imparted concerning these impulsive causes; considering that there is the same general nature in all evils of punishment, as consisting in the privation of their opposit good. The disciples rightly supposed that the blindness of the man so born was from God justly, & that he punishes children, for their parents sins; but mistook in taking it for granted, that either his parents, or he in his soul before his body was formed, had been more than ordinary sinners, or in some kind at least, which was the cause of his blindness, and asked Christ, whether it was: who answered, *neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents*, that is, as they meant, and their question implied, not greater sinners than others, or in relation to this as the cause to the effect: *But that the works of God should be made manifest in him*, which intimates a quite different reason, from what they imagined, not God's punitive justice for either of their sins, but his love to Christ and his doctrine, in the manifesting his power in a miraculous cure, and mercy to the blind man's soul to be the chief causes. Where we may observe, how Christ diverts them, as every where else, from curious enquiries; resolving this affliction, as an *infelicitas* or misery into Gods sovereignty, that denies or gives his blessings, in kind or degree, to whom, when, and in what manner he pleases, it being *lawful for him to do what he will with his own*; and denying it to be *poena* from justice for any greater or particular sins, as they judged (tho otherwise both were sinners, and to a sufficient ground in point of justice, to deprive either of sight, or any other blessings in life, or all in death, yet this difference proceeded not there-from) and then directs them by the final cause, to judge of the impulsive or reason of this providence, and to regard the ends and consequences thereof, as that which concerned them; which in this case were extraordinary in respect of the miracle, and ordinary in regard of the spiritual good this affliction occasioned and wrought both for himself and others. Let

Les us therefore accordingly now apply our selves to the *final cause* or the reasons taken from the end: not in reference to the dead which in ordinary cases is a secret to us, as I have shewn, but the living. Which we must understand, not of the *finis operantis*, or what God designs in particular thereby, which is different in all, and no further known to us, than as manifested by the effects; or in *general* only as tending to his glory (which if we speak properly is only his end, and all things whatsoever without himself but means joyntly considered tending thereto, and which he uses for the same *Rom. 11: 36*) But the *finis operis* in reference to us, as these providences are means fitted by him for such ends, as tend to the common good of the living; which is allways superior to particular sufferings. And tho sad experience shews us, that for the most part providences have not the effects upon us answerable to their ends; yet that's through our default (as we see allso in the ordinances) and if so be these moral means obtain not their primary end as medicinal to better us, yet their secondary, serving at least to justify God, and render those that make small or no use of them, or contrary than they ought wholly inexcusable, and more especially those who have the word to direct them and interpret to them their end and use. For the end God's word declares, allways implies the use we should make of every thing, both in the general, and particularly according to their kind and degree. But I shall pass by the general ends of afflictions and death, and only speak of those more peculiar to this kind of death I am upon; nor yet of many that might be drawn from the ends thereof in reference to God, his son and our Savior, his word, ordinances and graces of his spirit, the good and evil things of this life, our sins, and those concern'd nearly and remotely; but of a few that are most comprehensive; suggesting the suitable use of them the end implies, that my future discourse may be more practical; reserving those that are more particular for the Application.

I Then God thus suddenly and unexpectedly takes away som, that the supremacy of his providence may be more apparent, and himself thereby better known and acknowledged in the world. That this is the general end of God's unexpected dealings with men, in mercies and judgements extraordinary, and all other cases above their thoughts and contrivances, appears by hundred places of Scripture.
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relating both to his people and heathens, exprest in those phrases, *that ye or they may know that I am the Lord*, and implied in the effect (which is the end accomlisht, for *finis in actu positus dicitur effectus*) and *ye or they shall know that I am the Lord*. And experience shews us, that while things goe on smoothly and evenly as men suppose they should, all run along with them, and are apt to judge them the effects of humane counsels, and actions in the use of such means as conduce thereunto: but when any thing happens above or contrary to their thoughts and expectations, and is accomlisht by such means and in such a manner, as they could not think of or imagin, and cannot find out any satisfactory reason for, then they looke above and beyond natural causes, and acknowledg *the finger of God*. Who frequently deals with us in our lives, as *Jacob* with *Joseph's*, sons crossing his hands contrary to expectation, and in our death alſo, making one or other that we thought should live drop down dead unexpectedly; whereby we are put to a stand and look on, as all the people did at *Amaziah's* and consider whence this came; and not satisfying our selves concerning any visible cause of this difference, are ready to acknowledg an invible power and providence in both the parts of it viz: preservation and government, in preserving us and others that were as likely to die, and taking away those that were as likely to live. So that God's extraordinary providences being the great witnesses of himself to the world; it becoms our duty to eye and acknowledge him in them accordingly; his *wisdom* in contriving such a concurrence of causes and circumstances as we never thought on, his *power* in executing what we never feared, his *mercy* in sparing greater sinners, his *justice* in cutting off whom and when he pleases, and his *dominion* over all, ruling high and low, rich and poor together, so that as men see or may see, so let them say among all nations, that the Lord most high reigneth over all the inhabitants of the earth.

II. That all men may see more clearly, that their times are onely in God's hand, *Pſ. 31:15*. or in his sole power, his constant care and custody, and his disposal at his pleasure. All its true have or may have a *notional* knowledge of this from the light of nature, and those in the Church most fully from Scripture; but this is too weak, to make us look beyond the course of natural causes, above to him who hath

hath the ordering of them all , so as to keep the eye of our souls habitually fixt upon him , as we ought. He is therefore pleas'd sometimes to use such providences in great daingers, deliverances , and deaths so circumstantiated , as therein we may acknowledge his hand , and thereby gaine such *experimental knowledge* of him and his dealings with us , as will lead us to the owning and acknowledging of him , and seconded by grace set up his sovereignty in our souls. For it is not so much death in it self that affects us, because it is common ; as the remarkableness of it one way or other , which leaves an impression upon us , and raises our sluggish minds to consider, from what hand such a blow should come. Who except som few Relations think themselves concern'd at the death of weak infants, and sickly persons , or aged ? But when the young are taken away in the flower of their age ; or the strong that were most likely to live , are dead on a sudden and laid in the dust ; or the great and rich that have all means possible to preserve them , are cut down like the gras and wither as the green herb ; these are so many sensible demonstrations to convince us , that our times are not in the hands of second causes , or meerly casual and fortuitous, seeing these are so frequent , but onely in God's , who disposes of them as he pleaseth. Time indeed strangely wears out the present sense we have of these things : but God is pleas'd so often to give us such pregnant examples hereof, as if we duly regard them, are not only sufficient to renew the former impressions upon us , but afford us stronger convictions of this truth. This improvement of such providences, would bring us as *Moses* desired the *Israelites*, to acknowledge God, as the cause of our *lives and length of our days*, who gives them at his pleasure, and for his pleasure continues them, that orders them as he pleaseth, and cuts them off when he pleaseth ; and to depend upon him continually for them ; and with holy *Job* not to charge God foolishly, but whether he gives, continues, or takes away, still to *bleſs the name of the Lord*. As we learn this lesson more or less, so we shall find it accordingly not only thus useful, but also comfortable to us : by the assurance God's people have thereby that in all times , tryals, and changes they are allways in the hands of their tender father, that *knows their frame, and remembers they are dust* ; tho' the wicked that will not be instructed, are in the hand of God as a Judge, whose

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sentence and execution they shall not escape. Considering that if our times were in Satan's or our enemies hands, they would swallow us up quick; or in our friends power, they would not suffer us to depart, and be with Christ which is far better; or in our own, we should in our discontents be weary of them, and ready to cry out as *Moses, Elijah, Job, Jeremiah, and Jonah* have don, *now Lord take away my life*, rather than patiently wait his pleasure.

III. That sin may be imbittered, and mercy embraced: and particularly our first apostacy from God, and our Savior and the means of recovery. For as God's sentencing man to bodily penalties after his first sin for good to his soul, was to humble him for that, and all other sins that followd upon it, and make him feare his justice by seeing and feeling such effects of it, and fly to his grace and mercy through the promised Messiah: so his inflicting them must therefore be accordingly accounted a means for these ends conjointly. The All-wise God knowing what prodigious blindnes of mind and security of heart followed sin in us; is therefore pleased for our awakening to use outward punishments ordinarily, these being only visible, and so fitter to have influence generally on all men, and being also more feared by the secure world, than those inward and spiritual judgments on the soul. So that the very heathen, who being through their forefathers separte from the Church, are ignorant of the causes and manner of the entrance of these punishments by the *fall*, and much more of Christ, and so account death because common to all, a debt to nature, and the grievous accidents thereof punishments only for actual offences: yet by these external judgments they may and should be brought, and when extraordinary and general often are, to feare God's justice and fly to his mercy in the general, tho they cannot make that especial use of them, for those higher ends and in subordination to especial grace, that Scripture declares; and which the Jews who have the Old Testament shewing the *fall* and clearly testifying of Christ (tho they wilfully reject him) and we Christians ought and should; and for which God is pleased to use them in his Church. For tho we have the law that discovers sin, and condemns sinners to eternal punishments; and the Gospel that renders us pardon, and eternal salvation; yet so great is our unbelief and the love of our lusts, that we litle regard them; till God awaken us, and lets us see and feel

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experimentally by outward or inward troubles or both, the evil of our sins and how destructive they are to us, and thereby bring us to condemn and loath them, and our selves for them, and value his mercy through Christ for pardoning them. For which ends he makes use especially of those, that are most powerful to convince men of, and affect them with his justice, sins heinousness, the sinners desert, and need of mercy. Of which kind are those punishments, which are generally inflicted on all apparently according to his threatnings: wherein are seen, the greatness of the offence, God's resolution to punish, his power and impartiality in punishing great as well as small, so that none can flatter themselves with hopes of impunity. And those that have the offence legibly written upon them, so that all may read the sin in the punishment, and see God's equity therein; whereby he is justified and the offender condemned, even by himself as well as others, as we find among the very heathen *Judges 1. v. 7.* And those punishments that are great, and so shew the greatness of the offence, justice never proportioning them greater, but mercy mitigating them to less than the offenders deserts. All which kinds of punishment concur in death, as most clearly appears by the scriptures; which declare God's threatening thereof before, and sentencing all to it after for our apostacy (*Gen. c. 2. and c. 3.*) as a suitable punishment for our wilful despising of life, virtually promise in the threatening of death; and that which shews us the greatness of our offence, in that it is the greatest of punishments, comprehending all other miseries, as life it deprives us of all other mercies, *Rom. 6: 23.* And yet more signally do all these appear in the kinds of death we this day celebrate: the mother bringing forth in sorrow, because the woman was first in the transgression, and dying for her having transgressed, and the little infant for that only. So that it is better for us to go to this house of mourning than feasting (as Solomon saith *Eccles 7: 2.*) for that is the end of all men, and therefore will be thine and mine, and the living will lay it to heart: intimating the reason of that being the end of all, from the usefulness thereof to the living, that seriously will consider it, as a spectacle of their own mortality, whereof sin especially original was the moral cause, whatever were the natural, together with the manner thereof in regard of their inward and outward man. How bitter therefore should the remembrance of

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and sorrow for our first transgression be to us, and all other sins as proceeding from it; especially our wilful and deliberate offences, which are as so many approbations of our first parents apostacy, whereby we have so often declared, we should have done as they did, had we been in their place; how hardly soever we are apt to think, and many also to speak of them! And how acceptable should Christ be to us, as the only Mediator to bring us back again to God from whom we have fallen, and reconcile us to him, whom we have offended: who by his death hath redeemed their souls from destruction that will embrace him, taken away sin the sting of death, strength from the law to condemn them eternally, sanctified the grave to their bodies by his own lying in it, and by his resurrection given them assurance of their victory over it, in their bodies rising again, and being fashioned like to his glorious body! For it is this our apostacy from God at first, that brought in this sad *separation*, of all our comfortable relations; both spiritual between God our father and us, and natural between husband and wife, parents and children, kindred and friends, and soul and body at last here, and both from happines for ever hereafter; and also intaild upon us all miseries, which are more in this life than can be numbered, and greater in that to com than can be exprest. And Christ only that makes up again the *union* for his people in spiritual relations, his father ours, himself our husband, all his brethren and sisters, and all necessary comforts in natural relations in this life, and soul and body to meet again, and both with happines for ever, freeing us from eternal miseries, and all those temporal which he procures not to work together for our good.

4 That such as are taken away by untimely death, may be examples and warnings to the living. 1. *To deter them from the like sins*, where they were notorious and the cause of their punishment: every example of punitive justice being a fulfilling of the threatening of the law on the Offender, and virtually a threatening for the like offence to others. This course God took especially with his Church in its infancy, training them up, as we doe our children, with temporal threats and promises, mercies and judgements: whereas now in its maturity under the Gospel on a better covenant, he uses more especially spiritual promises of grace and salvation, and threatnings of spiri-
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tual and eternal punishments, and deals with us accordingly, the more powerfully to allure us to holines, and deter us from wickednes. Yet in regard we are still men oflike passions, and no less moved with examples, he declares this to be the end of all such temporal judgements to us Christians, and requires us to make this use of them, 1 Cor. 10. 6. The Israelites suddenly destroyed several times in the wilderness, saith the Apostle, *were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted*; commanding us to avoid their sins thereafter mentioned, and declaring that *(all these things happened to them for ensamples, or types, and are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. v. 7. -- 11.* Thus the untimely death of many of the *Corinthians* for their profanation of the Lord's supper is recorded, that we should beware thereof; 1 Cor. 11. v. 30. So also when the crime is apparent in the punishment; as *Paul's* being guilty of stoning *Stephen* in his being stoned by the *Jews*, and drawn out of the city supposing he had been dead, tho' he was miraculously revived, or at least restored *Acts* 14. 19, 20. And this use we are to make of those extraordinary examples of God's judgements, that fall out in all ages and nations, for execrable murders, perjury and dreadful imprecations, great persecution and oppression &c. wherein histories abound, and † several have collected examples thereof, that all that know them might be affrighted from the like offences. This being the end of publique punishments, as scripture declares by the effect and use the living should make of them; and all or those which remain shall heare and feare, and shall do no more any such wickednes *Deutr.* 13. 11. and 19, 20. to which both the *Greeks* and *Latins* agree. * For by the proportion of justice, doe alike and have alike, as well in punishments as rewards; which allways first or last hath place with God, who changeth not through defect of knowledge, wisdom, or power as men doe frequently. Not allways in this life nor in the same manner, as in his miraculous judgements; or in the same measure, but the examples shew the desert thereof; as in the decimation of an army, the General's putting som few to death, to prevent future mutinies, shews the rest what they have deserved, and

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† *Reinold's God's Revenge of murder Camerarii opera subcisiva centur.* 1. c. 86. & centur. 3. c. 33, 34, 36, 38. *Corrutijs de providentia.* l. 3. c. 24.

* *Grotius de I. B. & P. L.* 2. c. 20.

what so offending they may expect for the future. God usually *reserving the wicked to the day of destruction, they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath*, Job. 21. 30. and exercising riches of patience and forbearance towards them, and upon their humiliation and disciplinary repentance, deferring or remitting their temporal punishments, even after their denunciation, as in *Ahab* and *Nineveh*, and others generally Jer. 18. 7. 8. and on the contrary, where unfeigned repentance makes way for the prerogative of grace to pardon, often punishing his own people in this life more than others; but allways in the world to come, divine justice will render to every man according to his deeds, Rom. 2. 2. -- 11.

But where no extraordinary sins are manifest, these examples serve 2. to caution us and restrain us that we offend not God presumptuously in any kind: But that we stand in awe and sin not against him, who can every moment bring us to judgement. For this is the end why God doth such things, *that men should feare before him*. Eccles. 3. 14. the neglect whereof becomes the cause of the sudden destruction of secure sinners. For the sentence of death being past upon all sinners, if the execution of it more speedily upon less offenders, and the delaying of it upon greater be so abused by the wicked, that *therefore their hearts are set in them to doe evil*; yet Solomon tells us of his own certain knowledge, that *though a sinner do evil an hundred times and his days be prolonged, so as he lives his full time in the course of nature yet surely I know, it shall not be well with the wicked*, as it shall be with the righteous in their future state, *neither shall he prolong his days which are as a shadow*, in regard the days of the wicked are cut off suddenly before the time of their expectation, or at least preparation for death, *because he feareth not before God*, in an awful shunning to displease him. Eccles. 8. 17. -- 13. And Solomon's observation in this kind hath been made by many, that those who, in their health despise both God's word and warnings, when death threatens them, cry out, oh call time again! oh that I might live a little longer! oh that God would but try me once more! and make great promises to God and men of their future amendment, usually in their own strength which oftentimes com to little if they recover, and if they die, declare their unpreparednes for death. And yet better some sense of God, and feare of his future judgements at the last than not at all, but spend their

their days in mirth, and in a moment go down to the grave, *Job 21. 13*. The Apostle's therefore admonition is good, and holds in all examples in those of like condition, not to be *high minded*, but *fear*, for if God spared not them, take heed lest he also spare not thee *Rom. 11. 20, 21* and *Hebr. 4. 1*. And 3 to cure sin in us. For these are means whereby we are brought to the *seare of the Lord*, by which men depart from evil, *Prov. 16. 6*. Thus God cured the remnant of the Jews of their Idolatry, which they were so addicted to formerly, and ever after detested above all others. *Ezech. 23*. Where *Judah* and *Israel* are set forth as two spiritual adulteresses being at ease, and God saith, *I will bring a company upon them*, namely the *Assyrians* and *Chaldeans*, that shall stone them with stones, as the Jews punish adulterers, and dispatch them with their swords, they shall slay their sons and their daughters &c. thus will I cause lewdnes to cease out of the land, that all women may be taught not to do after your wickednes, that is other cities and nations compared here to women, especially where his church should be planted may learne to refraine from Idolatry, and if they will not to see what the cure thereof will cost them. And *David* a type of *Christ* prophecies, this should be a means of reforming the visible Church, God shall suddenly shoot at them, with an arrow suddenly shall they be wounded, and all men shall feare and shall declare the works of God for they shall wisely consider of his doings. *Pf. 64*. see also *Ps. 25. 2. 3*. And as in general so in particular examples this is not to be doubted of; as that the sudden death of *Eli* hath been, and is instrumental to cure, the fond indulgence of many parents to their children in wickednes, and of *Aboton*, their inordinate affection. If so be no sins are mentioned; or more than ordinary apparent to us in any so taken away; then to cure us of those sins we know our selves guilty of before God; and more especially those that are relative, as good *Jacob's* too much love and doting upon his *Rachel* here in the text. 4 To awaken us out of our security. For which end especially, we have security as the fore-runner, and speedy destruction that follows it, joynd together by our Savior, in the types he hath given us of his coming to judgment, both of all in general, and every one in particular, As the destruction of the old world, *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, and *Jerusalem*; they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, buying and selling, planting and building; whereby *Christ* de-

clares, how litle they expected, they should be forthwith speedily destroyed; and that so also shall his coming be, even like to lightning for its suddennes, or a thief in the night for its unexpectednes; and then makes this inference *watch therefore for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come*, calling it *such an hour as they think not*, declaring he would honour those that made this use of it, *but if, the evil servant say in his heart my Lord delays his coming &c. The Lord of that servant will com in a day when he looks not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of.* Math. 24 and Luke 17. Nothing more exemplifies this than sudden death, which cries to every one, *behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him*, to awaken all; for its said *they all slumbred and slept*, the wise virgins slumbred and the foolish slept, so that none in the visibible church but have need of wakening, *Math. 25.* For as in nature troubles either feared or felt both awaken us out of our sleep, and keep us from sleeping: so in grace, there being few Christians to be found, that either the fears of death and judgements, by som warnings of them, or some inward or outward troubles have not awakend and kept watching. We are naturally so sensual and immerst in the things of this life, so regardles of God, his word, and our eternal concerns, and so apt to put the evil day far from us: that God is mercifully pleased by examples, as well as precepts and threats to rouse us up to consider our latter end, that we may not run heedlesly on to our eternal destruction. As it is usual with God to forewarne both nations and cities before he smites them, as all histories both sacred and profane testify, we never reading of judgements but for mercies abused: so also particular persons, there being none of years, but have warnings in this kind, and may every where see graves shorter than their own. For as security shakes off the feare of sin and misery, and makes us look on death and judgement at a distance: so the feare of them makes them seem neer us, and to reflect upon our selves and the desert of our sins, and consider our later end, thereby becomming instrumental to make us serious, which is the first step in religion, and to turn our sloth into diligence, our indifferency into earnestnes, and our inconstancy into stableness and resolution. Lastly *To bring us to repentance.* As this is the end of God's threatnings, that he may not punish if we will repent: so its also of his executing them, that
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others may take warning ; all his providences being a fulfilling of some threat or promise in his word. This even the *Ninivites* understood as appears by their practise upon Jonah's denunciation of their destruction : and thus our Savior expounds these providences , which are rich in sense as well as the word , howbeit we seldom fully comprehend it. Who preaching in *Galilee* , was interrupted by some News-mongers from *Jerusalem* , that told him of the *Galileans* , whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices , (in *Jerusalem* , for Pilate had no jurisdiction , but Herod over the *Galileans*) supposing they were some extraordinary sinners , because they suffered such things , *Luke 13*. Christ according to his great wisdom , neither taxes Pilate's fact of cruelty (as they might possibly suppose) nor approves it ; nor denies those *Galileans* to be sinners and suffer justly , but only that they were greater sinners than all the rest , shewing that they were not to be judged as such , because of their suffering , and adds the like concerning those 18 on whom the tower in *Siloam* fell and slew , declaring from both these examples , the general use the living should make of the sudden death of others , which is to repent ; this being the end of Gods sparing us to give us time and space for repentance , and his taking away others to stir us up to make use of our time accordingly. And the more to awaken them to this duty , shews the more especial use of these to them , in a propheticall commination from the manner of their perishing , making it a type or emblem to the living of their future destruction (as *Samuel* did by *Saul's* rending his mantle , of God's rending the Kingdom from him) saying , *except ye repent , ye shall all likewise perish*. Denoting , that as those *Galileans* were slain by *Pilate* the Roman governor and his soldiers , so the *Galileans* should after by the Roman army : and as the 18 in *Jerusalem* were slain by the fall of the tower in *Siloam* , so the dwellers in *Jerusalem* should be by the fall of their other towers and walls. Which , they not repenting was accordingly accomplit in both. For the *Romans* first fell upon *Galilee* , and destroyed great numbers of them , and the rest flying to *Jerusalem* , at the time of the passover were with other Jews slain in such abundance , that the altar for sacrifices swimed with blood : and multitudes of the inhabitants of *Jerusalem* , it being besieged and taken by the *Romans* , were slain by the battering of their walls , and buried.

buried in the ruins of their city. So dangerous is it to neglect repenting from the warnings given us, and especially for those more immediately concern'd! So great wisdom and safety is there in true repentance, which will certainly save our souls from eternal, and is the only way to save our persons also and estates from publick calamities and temporal destruction! But oh the blindness and stupidity of most part of men, that when God's hand is lifted up, they will not see it! when he hedges up their sinfull ways with thorns, will needs run through them! when he smites som on their right hand, and others on their left, regard it not! that can go and com from funerals without a serious thought of their own! Common providences are but little observed by us, and therefore do but little move and affect us: but when we meet with unexpected occurrences, or interruption of the ordinary course of time and nature in the death of any, this is apt to startle us, and make us bethink our selves more than usually, and where grace sets in with it, becomes a means to better and reform us. Thus God often makes use of the sudden death of som, to bring others first to themselves by consideration, and afterwards to himself by repentance; and especially those in the like condition, when one is taken and another left, som destroy'd and others saved, this making both a deeper and lastinger impression; and those more neerly concern'd in, or related to the deceased. For as we often think this or that occasion'd their death, and these or those things might have prevented it, the thoughts whereof frequently trouble us afterwards: so our former carriage towards them, and theirs to us coms now afresh to our remembrance, feeds our sorrow, and lays the foundation of our repentance. These and those things saith conscience thou shouldst have done, and so and so thou shouldst have carried towards them, and didst not; and this and that thou shouldst not have done, nor carried in this or that manner to them, and didst; thou might have got much good by them, and hast not; and done more good to them, and wouldst not; thou matterdst not what became of their souls, and knowest thou what will becom of thine? Then thinks the sinner, what if their case had been mine? where had I now been if I had been so hurried to judgment? my conscience tells me I am not fit to die, I cannot say my sins are pardon'd, and my peace made with God whom I have so greatly offend'd: he hath now warn'd me to flee from the wrath to com, and should

Should I not take it? shall I still except my self and say this shall not be to me? why should I think to be spared, when others are taken away whose sins mine have exceeded? the time by-past is too much to have wrought the will of the flesh, I am resolved now to make better use of the present and future, so long as God shall spare me, to prepare for death and for eternity. And as these providences are thus merciful means to bring about a blessed change in us, so also to carry it on still further and further. How lively doth sudden death set-forth to us the necessity of repentance in all the kinds of it! As the vanity of the creature, and the necessity of making God our portion; the shortnes of our own righteousness, seeing we must appear before a just and holy God, and the necessity of Christ and his righteousness; the evil of sin, whereof we have nothing to expect but shame and sorrow, and the necessity of holines, all its paths ending in peace, and without which we shall never see God in happines. And how much the same contributes, to promote these gradually also in us, the constant experience of all Gods people abundantly witnes.

§ That all may learn experimentally many particular and necessary lessons they formerly disregarded. The light of nature shews us fundry of them, and the light of scripture more clearly all of them; but unbelief doubts of them, sensuality constantly opposes them, and as men asleep we generally neglect them. God is therefore pleased to use unexpected providences, which draw the curtain, and let in the light so convincingly and sensibly upon us, that without wilful shutting our eyes we cannot withstand it: that so his truth being taught and backt by our own experience, may be more readily embraced and obeyed. For experience is a more sensible argument than notions to convince us of the truth, and less liable to ignorance and mistake for confirming us in it, and more particular and prevalent with us to practise it. Let me therefore name som of those excellent lessons which still hang on this one bough suddenly broken off from us. As 1 the vanity and frailty of life. Such a death cries to us with the word, *all flesh is grass, and all the goodlines thereof is as the flower of the field: the wind passeth but over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.* Is. 40. 6. Ps. 103. 16. 2 The nearnes of death and judgment. If thou wilt put these far from thee,

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this summons will convince thee of thy folly, that *this night thy soul may be required of thee* Luke 12. 19, 20. 3 The necessity of being prepared for thy dissolution. For the night of death cometh whether thou thinks of it or no, *when no man can work*; there being no knowledge nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest; no casting up thy accounts in the dark, nor perfecting them with God in the grave. Job. 9. 4. Eccles. 9. 10. 4 The danger of deferring thy preparation. For *in an hour thou thinks not of*, may Christ call thee to give an account of thy stewardship, for *thou shalt be no longer steward*. Matth. 24. Luke 16. v. 2. 5 The preciousnes of time to prepare for eternity. For *time is short*, and were it longer little enough for so great a work, and allso uncertain, as thou feelt: and therefore not to be lavisht out upon thy lusts, seeing thine eternal welfare depends upon it. 1 Cor. 7. 29. 6 The vain hopes of living many years. Since *thou knowest not what a day may bring forth*: no more than what a woman with child, whether male or female living, or dead as tis this day, Prov. 27. 1. 7 The groundles presumption of a lingring death, when thou seest some in a moment go down to the grave, and many die in their full streng. Job. 21. 13, 23. 8 How quickly the greatest hopes are dashed and expectations disappointed. Here's a child com to the birth, and no strengith to bring forth, but mother and child die together: there's a strong man saith with Agag *surely the bitterness of death is past*, and the next hour it returns and carries him away, 1 Sam. 15. 9 Moderation towards the things of this life. For *the Lord is at hand*, ready to call thee quickly from thy good things, who makes them thy portion, and then *whose shall they be?* and where wilt thou be? and to take thee, who makes him thy happines, from the evils of this life, that they no more shall torment thee. Philip. 4. 5. 10 The different nature of earthly enjoyments and heavenly. Earthly promise much and in the tryal faile our expectations: But heavenly we find best upon tryal, and such as *will never fail us nor forsake us* Heb. 13. 5. And lastly, the vast difference between our present and future state. Here we meet and part presently; there we meet and never part, here's nothing but changes, there's none but a stable eternity. 1 The. 4. 17.

These Reasons I hope may suffice for the several sorts of sudden death mentioned on this occasion, to justify God's proceedings therein; and to shew us the gracious design of these kind of providences, that seem

seem of all others most dismal to us; none so much as these conducing to the general good of mankind, as tending to awaken us out of our security, cure us of our spiritual distempers, and point out to us and quicken us to our duty. Let us see to it, that we make use of them accordingly: and what further improvement may be made of the present providence we shall now speake to by way of inference and application.

U/1. Hence learn the uncertain tenure, or manner of holding our nearest Relations, and dearest friends and acquaintance. That seeing them liable continually to be lost, we may be more sensible our enjoying them is but of meer curtesy, and that we are but tenants at will for them, and all our other earthly comforts to God the great Lord of all: having by our sinful apostacy lost our right and title to the enjoyment of them, which he gave us at first by the covenant of works in our creation. For had we continued in our original state of integrity, there would have been none of this sorrowful parting of friends; but we should either have continued happy together on earth, or without suffering death have been, as *S. Austin* and others think, after some certain time translated into heaven; and whether all together at last, or successively at such a term of years, it would have been matter of triumphant rejoycing to all. But now having by sin forfeited and lost all our mercies, God hath been graciously pleased in the covenant of grace to alter his dispensation; not to trust us bankrupts with a new stock in our own hands, but to commit all to Christ, in whom he hath treasurd up spiritual life for his people; so that that is now in safe keeping, being *hid with Christ in God, Colos. 3. 3*. And this he hath assured us of by promise, upon our fulfilling the condition of the covenant: but hath reserved temporal life and the comforts thereof in his sovereign pleasure, to give, continue, or take away when and in what manner he pleases; that we might entirely depend upon him for all. So that if he will any day write a *Jacob* wives, a *Job* childles, a *David* friendles, a *Jeremiah* comfortles; there's no reason to gainsay it, no cause to complain or murmur at it, much less to implead him for it; seeing he takes but his own that he had only lent us for a time, never given or granted us absolutely to enjoy. Is it any injury then when the time is expired to require his own? Doth he make the matrimonial bond natural that husband and wife should die together? Hath he tyed child-

ren to their parents feet, or fasten them to their houses, as their pictures not to be parted withal or removed? If he lets us have our Relations a while here, and then takes them into the gallery of heaven; is it any detriment to them or us? Are they not so better cared for and bestowed, than they can be by us, what ever we think, and how much soever discontented? Thou wilt be ready to say, But why to soon? Why so unexpectedly? Hath not godlines the promise of this life, as well as that to come? And obedient children of their days being prolonged? Very true, godlines both interests us in God the giver, and in all the promises for every good gift; but for this life and all other temporal mercies only conditionally, so far forth as is good for us; So *God will not only give grace and glory, but will withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly* Ps. 84. 11. But what and how must we account good things? Spiritual good things indeed are absolutely good in themselves, and for all, and allways; but temporal, tho good in themselves, yet neither for all nor allways; but relatively onely in reference to the persons, for that which is good for some is hurtful for others, as one mans meat we say is another's poison, and in subordination to greater good, as this life in relation to eternal. Now who is fittest to judg what is best for us and when? The Father or the child? the physitian or the patient? the all-wise God or foolish man? We find what we thought worse proves for the better to us frequently; and God's time fitter then our own, tho hardly perswaded therof at present: so that referring our selves to him, our uncertainty is our greatest safety; and the condition annext to temporal blessings so far from a diminution, that it is an inhancing and confirmation of their promises. For thereby we are assured, that God will neither give his children anything to their real prejudice, nor take away any thing that was the best for them: that if he deprives them of temporals it is for their spiritual good, and all the crosses that befall them are better for them than the things they desire. All which not only recommend godlines even in regard of the things of this life: but are the greatest stay and security we can possibly have, to support us under all the variety of changes, that befall us in this evil world.

2 This serves to weane our hearts from being immoderately set on any of our Relations or creature comforts. Which is the Apostles inference.

inference 1 Cor. 7. 29, 30, 31. *Brethren, the time is short, it remaineth; both that they that have wives be as though they had none: and they that weep, as though they wept not: and they that rejoyce, as though they rejoyced not: and they that use this world as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.* Our fore-fathers are past away before us; the marriage knot loosens daily, and is either cut asunder by a violent, or untied by a natural death at last; Brethren and sisters and a friend sometimes dearer than a brother part, and are no more seen in the flesh; our children that are our selves only wrapt up in other skins, in whose life ours are often bound up, are frequently snatcht out of our arms, and if they crowd us out of the world quickly follow us to our long home. That as *Xerxes* beholding his great army wept to think, they should all of them shortly be laid in the dust: so may we over our living Relations as well as dead, considering we are liable continually to lose them. Let this then make us sit looser from them, and take off our hearts.

1 *From our inordinate affection to them.* It is our wisdom to set our hearts upon nothing, but that which is above the reach of dainger & disappointment: and to love nothing much, but what we cannot love excessively. As God that will be our portion for ever, when all these and our own lives faile us: and Christ our Savior that will make us happy with himself in heaven. If any steal away our hearts from them, and perk up in their place in our thoughts and affections; its mercy that breaks down such idols and grinds them to powder, or turns such comforts into crosses as would carry it in the competition with the blessed God and our dear Savior. We are so bewitcht with these sensible enjoyments, and are so taken up with them; that even good *Jacobs* have need of imbittering circumstances to wean them from their *Rachel*s and *Joseph*s; and holy *David*s from their *Michals* and *Abshons*, and all from their over-loved Relations and creature comforts. How immoderately for the most part doe we desire them! How eagerly doe we pursue them! How ardently doe we love them! How highly doe we value them! How excessively doe we delight in them! How anxiously doe we keep them! How passionate are we when crossd in them! How fearful are we of losing them! How loth are we to part with them! How perplexd when we have lost them! And yet all these inordinacies must be cured in us or we cannot be Christ's disciples. *Math. 10.*

v. 37. *Luke 14. 26.* Which ordinary medicines will not doe, these distempers are so strongly rooted in us; and therefore the wise Physitian of souls is pleased often mercifully to use such severities as are necessary to imbitter our earthly comforts and endear himself and our Saviour to us. Who that duly considers how little God's commands, the promises of heaven, the threatnings of hell, Christ's calls, and his Ministers pleadings prevail with men to love him more than father or mother, wife or child as the Gospel requires; but must acknowledg the usefulness of these warnings to us for that end, and the necessity of God's sharpest rods for Physick as well as his word for food for our souls, and consequently the reason why it is the portion of his people to suffer affliction rather than the rest of the generality of the world.

Secondly *From placing our happiness in them.* Man in innocency had a mind to know, a will to choose, and affections to delight in God as his happiness: but since sin hath broke down his image in us, such is the wretchedness of our hearts, that usually the better God is to us, the worse we are to him; and the more enjoyment he gives us of earthly friends the more we forget our heavenly father. When we want and desire husbands, wives, children, friends or any earthly comforts that we cannot obtaine, we seek God for them, and when he threatens to take them from us, we cry to him to spare us them; but when we enjoy these, even when he denies or takes them away from others, and have most reason to eye and own him in them, depend upon him for them, and use them as encouragements to serve him that gives and continues them to us; we are apt to forget him, set these up in his room, make them our God, and take up with them as our portion; so that he is then little regarded of the most, and less than he ought by the best. When hetherfore blows upon these blessings, it is to bring us to set them in their due place, and keep them so in subordination to himself, and make us mind him more for the future, and them less than formerly; lest these streams of creature comforts that should lead us to him, should draw us from him, and drown us in perdition, For now that reason through sin hath lost its sovereignty over us, sense lying so near us usually sways us; and brings the soul not only to comply with the necessities of our present state, in these Relations for the comfort of this life (which is lawful, being
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God's institution in innocency) but to such a condescension to the body, which only skils sensual things, that for the most part men live a meer animal life without God in the world, not like men capable of enjoying him, much less like Christians. How happy were it then, that as by experience we learn the worth of these things by the want of them, so we would also their worthlesnes in comparison of him, who is our only happiness: thus should we gain more by our parting with them than by our enjoying them, & com to make a happy exchange. These providences duly considered, and rightly used would recall us back again from the creature to God, awaken conscience, and make every one turn preacher to himself, that God may have the prevailing choice. Saying, I see husband or wife, parents or children are soon gon, all of them but vanity, miserable comforters are ye all. I said I shall die in my nest, my beloved yoke-fellow shall comfort me, this son will be the stay of my old age, that friend will be my support: but how quickly am I disappointed of one, and may be of all these perishing comforts! I still thought and hoped satisfaction would arise from these things I had a mind to, liked and loved; but find my self continually deceived. I will therefore seek it no more in these houses of clay, where it is not to be found, but in the living God, in whose enjoyment it is only to be had: and then I may hope, contentment with the portion of these he gives me, will also dwell with me, which hath been all along so great a stranger. How have I foolishly forsaken the fountain of living waters of salvation, and been hewing out to my selfe one broken cistern after another of creature comforts, when I still found as fast as I made them, they will hold no water! I have too long dabled in these nether springs that only feed the winter brooks, which dry up on a sudden when I most want them: I will betake me to the upper springs of grace, that flow continually, which can only quench the thirsty desires of my soul. *Lord, whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire in comparison of thee; all these faile me, but thou wilt never faile me, therefore I choose thee for my portion, who wilt be so for ever.*

Pf. 73.

And lastly from our dependence upon them for support and comfort. Man fallen from God affects a self-sufficiency, and finding the short-
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nes thereof in himself, in stead of looking above, and returning to him, looks about him, and cries who will shew me any good; and fixing on such earthly blessings as he either hath or hopes for, rests on them; so that God is but a cypher, and his blessings the figure with him, till he see his mistake. God indeed hath the name, and profession of our faith; but sad experience shews us, how ready our hearts are to depart from him, and to make the creature our confidence; and if our projects and expectations faile us therein, to sit down in despondency, as if there were no remedy. Even the best of men are apt to over-reckon themselves in their hopes, over-act their reliance on creature comforts, and leane too much on these sensible supports: till God lets them see what broken reeds they rely upon, and upon what sandy foundations they build vast hopes, which with the least puff of his displeasure fall to the ground. Then the hearts of foolish *Nabals* die within them: and holy *Dauids* drawn to comfort themselves in their God. Thus the Church forbidden to *trust in a friend*, or those most neerly allyed, and finding the disappointment of such adherence, resolves *I will look unto the Lord. Micah. 7. 5, 6, 7.* Thus the wife depending on her husband, when he is taken from her, and she a desolate widow *trusts in God, 1 Tim. 5. 5.* Thus the child of whom we say as *Lamech, this same shall comfort us*, being taken away, shews us our folly, in reckoning so long before hand, and on such uncertainties. These providences as well as the word calls to us, and saith, *Let not the wise man trust and glory in his wisdom*, seing unexpected events daily confound the wisest; *nor the strong man in his strength*, which every sicknes or small accident destroys; *nor the rich man in his riches*, which on a sudden take to themselves wings & fly away out of his reach; nor husband and wife, parents and children, friends and acquaintance in one another, which die and perish we see daily: but all in the living God at all times, who is the only rock to be relied on, all these being unstable as water, the Father of mercies, when all these becom miseries, and the God of all comfort when these can yield us none at all. *Jer. 9. 23. Ps. 63. 8. 2 Cor. 1. 3.*

3 This shews us the necessity of being always ready for death, and prepared for the death of ours, that we may not be surpris'd how suddenly soever either shall happen. The double example this day before us, summons us to this duty: seing then we have lost the

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comfort of their lives, lets not lose this benefit of their deaths. If the warnings of God's word hath not awakend us, let these alarms of his providence doe it. All grant it necessary to provide for this great change of time with eternity: and yet how wofully is it for the most part neglected! Men are so taken up with this world, especially the healthful, and those that wallow in pleasure and prosperity, that they have neither list nor leisure to think seriously and prepare for the next. As if they were priviledged from the like stroke, and had a protection from death's arresting them, or when it doth could bribe it off for some time, or make such a covenant with hell, as will secure them. So great is the security and stupidity of most, that they regard not these warnings, nor think themselves longer concerned, when once the funerals are over. Therefore that we may make better use of them.

1 Suppose the like or worse may befall thee or thine, whilst secure sinners still suppose the best. Not to disquiet thy selfe with groundlesse fears, but to prepare for all events of providence: which are so never the neerer thee, but thou much fitter for them; unexpected crosses of all others being the hardest born. Say then, what befalls others may befall me also, by this supposition as a prospective bring thy own and thy friends death neer thee, think of it frequently, and converse with it familiarly, that so neither may surprize thee. Exempt not thy selfe or thy Relations from that which frequently befalls others. How many are the acute diseases that quickly snap mans life asunder! How many the casualties and accidents whereby men of all ranks and conditions have perisht in all ages and places unexpectedly! * To reckon those recorded by authors, and known to our selves, would take up our whole time.

2 Flatter not thy self, that thou and thine shall live long and die leisurely. Oh the vain and deceitful hopes that most have of living still on and on they know not how long! The younger that have death on their backs think they must of course live to be aged; the old that have death before their faces, and gray hairs not only here and there upon them, but all over them, hope still of holding out; yea when sickness is entred, and death at the door, we still hope that we or ours shall escape with life. I have seldom met with one so old, that hoped not to rub out some years longer; and never with

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* Plin. l. 7. c. 93. de mortibus repentinis. Val. Max. l. 9. c. 12.
Zuinger Theatrum. l. 18.

any, to whom their years past and to com did not seem of a different length. Looking backwards on many years past, they count them but a short time, and usually their work therein litle; but looking forwards on a few before them, reckon them long, and what a deale of work they shall doe therein; so easily doe we deceive our selves in numbering our days and measuring our work, that will not be deceived by others in any account that is of concernment. 3 Reckon life by days not years, seeing none know what hour the son of man will com and call for them. Thus the best and wisest of men reckoned their lives, as *Jacob, Moses, Job, David and Solomon. Gen. 47. v. 9. Ps. 90. 14. Job 14. 5. Ps. 39. 5. Eccles. 8. 15.* This right numbering our days would make us apply our hearts to wisdom; by improving our present time and opportunities in the day of grace, cutting off our vain hopes of future uncertainties, and looking on every day as a new gift of God for his work *Lam. 3. 23.* If *Horace* a heathen could say, *Omnem crede diem tibi diluxisse supremum*; much more should a Christian believe and live every day as his last; because it may be so, and if it be not, it is more than any one knows. Our Lord having wisely and mercifully conceald both the time and place of our departure from us, that our lives might not be spent in continual madnes, of mirth and vanity in our former, and of fears and melancholy in our later days; but might be restrained from sin, and quickned to duty; not delaying our preparations for death, but living in a constant expectation thereof; nor presuming of future time not in our power, but rightly improving our present, with our Apostle dying daily, and as a good man said, that of twenty years he had known no morrow. This divine arithmetick of numbring our days *Moses* and *David* begd of God, and much more need have we, to make our hearts so sensible of our frailty from these examples, that we may get ready to follow; and may not be only unwilling to live, as many through the troubles of life, but willing to die, which grace only enables us to when prepared. 4 Set these examples before thee so as they may affect thy heart, and make it restless till they be duly improved by serious consideration. That when others are destroyed from morning to evening, or every hour of the day, it may not be without any regarding it. *Job. 4. 20.* Say, how soon may this befall me or mine? How uncertain is our time here, and how certain death and eter-

eternity hereafter! How doe I loyter whilst time flies, and my glas perhaps ending and how litle of that work don, which must be don, or I am lost for ever! Am I fit to look death in the face, or a just and holy God in judgment? have I not delayed long enough already, and is there not danger in these delays? Is my soul and eternal salvation of so litle consequence, that my heart should still deceive me in disregarding them? Is it not wisdom to doe that first that is of greatest consequence and necessity? Is not all my time litle enough, for so great a work as preparing for eternity, and shall I lose more? Have so many of God's servants that have taken so much pains so long time in Religion fasting, weeping, praying, hearing &c. confest themselves unready for death, what shall I be that have don so litle? How dismal will death be to me, if no better prepared for it? Will Christ stay any more for me then he did for the foolish virgins? was it not only they that were ready that entred in with him? Or will he when once the door of mercy is shut, open it for me alone? No, no, I cannot expect it, and therfore will take his counsel, and *watch not knowing the day or hour wherein he cometh.* § Make sure to be habitually prepared at least for death, by being reconciled to God through Christ. Acquaint therfore thy self with him and be at peace: and take heed of living in that state, wherein thou wouldst be loth to die. See to the foundnes of thy repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and the sincerity of thy obedience; as ever thou meantst to secure the better part thy soule, and thy future happines in eternity. And labor after assurance, that when this earthly house of thy tabernacle is dissolved, thou hast an house eternal in the heavens, as ever thou desirest to die comfortably. The want of this makes death so dismal, to those that are sensible what it is to die. How many that live under the Gospel and know no more than the heathen *Adrian* whither they shall goe at their death, is lamentable to consider. Get thy self allso as much as possible actually prepared, by keeping up thy assurance, evening thy accounts daily with God, walking with him as *Enoch*, having thy conversation in heaven whilst on earth, and thy fellowship with the Father and his son Jesus Christ: so shall death never surprize thee, or affright thee, much less hurt thee; changing only thy place, not thy company, opening the door for thy entrance into life, and being ever with the Lord; which then thou wilt find beyond all thy present faith and hopes, in-

fruitly better than being in this world. Lastly prepare also for thy Relations leaving thee. Our seldom thinking of this before hand, makes it difficult for us to beare. Be sensible of and thankful for God's giving and continuing them to thee, seeing he denies them som, and takes them from others: use them as his left hand blessings, but enjoy them not as thy portion: depend on him for comfort from them, & resigne them to him from whom thou receivedst them: doe thy duty towards them whilst thou hast them, so shalt thou have comfort when thou losest them.

4 Let this caution us from rash censuring and judging of these kind of providences: seeing in the text God's taking away unexpectedly a good *Rachel* from *Jacob* one of his best servants. 1 Not the just and holy God for them: In denying him and his providence, with the Atheists. Who seeing often the vilest of men spared, as *Diogenes* did a perjur'd person; and better taken away, as *Cotta* his friend *Drusus*, and *Ovid* his *Tibullus*, open their mouths against heaven, in denying a God and his providence in the world. Or 2 in judging him unjust and cruel. For he delights not in death as it is the destruction of his creature, but as it is the exercising of judgment and righteousness in the earth. *Jer.* 9. 24. His works are wondrous, that though a wise man as *Solomon* think to know them, yet shall he not be able *Eccles.* 3. 17. The most inquisitive run but into a labarynth, wherein they lose themselves at last. For how can we possibly be able to judg of his proceedings, who are wholly ignorant of the grounds of them? It is God only that knows mens intentions, and his own designs that he hath to accomplish, and all the links in the chaine of providence: so that where he manifests not these, we are in the dark, and incompetent judges. Our profoundly learned Contry-man *Bradwardine* * hath a remarkable story to this purpose, of a devout man tempted to blaspheme providence, to whom God sent an angel in humane shape, that commanded him to follow him. And leads him to the house of a good man, who entertaind them very kindly that night: from whom he secretly took a cup he valedwed highly; and going thence to a wicked mans house the second night, who treated them not so well, gives him the cup at their departure. Having been the third night most curteously entertaind, in the morning he threw the mans servant off a bridge and drowns him; and coming the fourth night to an honest man that made them heartily welcom, slew his

* *De Causa Dei. L. 1. c. 31.*

his little son that cryed, and sufferd them not to sleep. Then he acquaints his follower why he did these so strange things, saying he was sent of God to satisfy him. I took the cup (saith he) from the first a good man for his good, because he lov'd it too much: and gave it the second a bad man, that he might receive his reward at present: I drowned the servant of the third because he had resolved the next day to slay his master, whom I preserved from death, and his servant from committing murder, that he might be less punisht in hell: The fourth before he had a son and heir was very charitable, and after grew penurious, therefore I took away the cause of his covetousnes, and conveyd his sons soul to paradise. So true is that of the Psalmist *Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep. Thy foot steps are not known*, and therefore cannot be traced by us poor ignorant mortals *Pf. 36. 6. and 77. 19.* Nor must we judge, when we see the righteous and wicked taken alike away, that God's Providence goes blindfold to work (as the Heathen think the fates doe) and sweeps away one and another hand over head: for so we shall neither eye God in, nor make a right use of his dealings with us. We cannot indeed make or discern the difference, as to us sickness and sword devours one as well as another: but this is *fallacia sensus*, both scripture and reason teaches us, that there is a very particular direction in all that befalls us from the hand of God. Every disease that happens, every bullet that flies, every wave of the sea, and every casualty have their commission from God, before they can touch or destroy any. If a sparrow falls not on the ground without him, much less a mans life: and if the very hairs of our head are allnumbred, much more our days are so &c determin'd, *Math. 10. 29, 30. Job. 7. 1. and 14. 5, 14. Prov. 16. 33.* Nor lastly must we imagin, that righteousness will exempt us from sudden destruction in common calamities with the wicked. As Abraham seems to judge in his pleadings for Sodom, *Gen. 18. 23, 24, 25.* For tho God will rather spare the wicked for the righteous sake, as he there declares; and in extraordinary cases where he hath past his particular promise doth so, as God gave Paul all that sailed with him *Acts. 27.* and makes a distinction, as *Ezek. 9. 4, 5, 6. Mal. 3. 17, 18.* yet in ordinary it is not so, but the green and dry tree, denoting as it follows, the righteous and the

the wicked perish together *Ezek.* 10. 47. and 21. 3. And no wonder, for usually the good are infected with, or one way or other guilty of the sins of the times and places where they live, and if they *partake in sins* its reasonable they also *partake in plagues.* *Rev.* 18. 4. Or if not, yet being mixt with the wicked, in an ordinary way it cannot be otherwise, as experience shews us in wars, famine, pestilence, inundations, shipwracks and the like. Especially earth-quakes, wherein many cities have been wholly swallowed up, and many with the inhabitants in a great part destroyed, the histories whereof would fill a volum. Passing those of old, 12 cities of *Asia* say *Pliny* and *Tacitus*, 13 faith *Ensebins* in our Saviors daies in one night: *Colossi*, *Laodicea*, & *Hierapolis* in the year 63. 3 in *Cyprus* in 77. 4 in *Asia* and 2. in *Greece* in 105. 3 in *Galatia* in 109. *Antioch*, *Nicomedia*, and *Nice* several times. *Nicopolis* and *Casarea* in 128. *Smyrna* also and *Corinth* afterwards and 10 in *Crete* in one year, so 20 in *Germany* in later times (besides many others, these being sufficient for my purpose) in most of which multitudes of Christians as well as others perisht. And as God takes them away as he sees good (*Ezek.* 16. 50) so when som are extraordinarily delivered, that is also ascribed to his sovereignty, and befalls the wicked as well as the righteous, as scripture shews us. *I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and ye were as a firebrand pluckt out of the burning, yet have ye not returned unto me saith the Lord.* *Amos.* 4. 11. So that the experience of all ages verifies *Salomon's* words, which are interpretative not exclusive of providence; and shews how things goe ordinarily under its conduct, when he saith all things come alike to all, there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked, *Ecclesi.* 9. 2. The same manner of afflictions and death materially befalling the one as the other. By which unseemling providence God secures his people from the rage and malice of Sathan and wicked men in this world, which would not be habitable for saints, if they were certainly known; and keeps off the scandal of Religion, none knowing who are sincere or only hypocritical; and mens coming to him for base ends, whereby we should have more professors but worse Christians. It being sufficient for his people's security, that he knows them perfectly, and makes a difference between them and the wicked of the world, in the same providence where we can make none; in his fatherly affection

tion to them therein, in his intencion direction and ordering thereof for their good, and in his issuing all in their eternal salvation. 2 As we must not judge amis of God's proceedings, so neither must we rashly judg of those so taken away. Either of the cause (like the Barbarians that judged the Apostle Paul a murderer from the viper fastning on his hand, thinking he would fall down dead suddenly) of which I have spoken in the reasons: or of their eternal state and condition. For if the life be good, no manner of death is bad: and if the life be bad the death is seldom good: no evil of punishment but only of sin abates God's fatherly affection to his children, but rather increales it; or any way lessens their interest in his favor: witness *Abel* and all the Prophets to *Zacharias* slain between the Temple and altar, *Stephen* and all the Apostles and Martyrs, and best of men in all ages. I know but one place of scripture that looks like judging mens eternal state by temporal judgments, and that is of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab* and the cities about them suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, *Jude. 7.* Which yet is not meant of the next world in hell (tho being the worst we read of, and not ten righteous amongst them are damned most of them, as Christ that knew intimates, when he saith *Math. 11.* it shall be more tolerable for them than *Corazin* at the day of judgment, the degree implying the kind) but only the duration of the judgment in this world, and as an emblem of the day of judgment when God shal bring a *deluvium ignis* as *Irenaus* calls it, or rain hell out of heaven upon the world that now is, and of the punishment of the wicked, as the Psalmist alluding therto tells us *this shall be the portion of their cup Ps. 11. 6.* Learne we then to goe no further than scripture, that speaks sparingly of mens eternal state, and never that I know of concludes damnation from God's punishments here, but allways from mens sins unrepented of: and let us make no conclusions upon such false grounds, nor presume to ascend Christs tribunal in condemning any to eternal punishments. *Peverius* and others are too bold in asserting all the old world that were drowned except infants were damned. For not to mention their number, that world in all probability being as populous as the present, and granting the generality were, even of the sons of God that had corrupted their ways; yet scripture speaking only indefinitely, it is not for us to make it universal that all had, or that none repented upon the flood's approaching, albeit God only establish

covenant with *Noah* and his family, as afterwards with *Abraham* and his, as the best in their generations. Nor lastly must we censure the Relations of any suddenly taken away, as if it were for som extraordinary sins that God so deals with them. Which was the fault of *Job's* three friends. For the devil whom God ordinarily restrains of his will more than wicked men (in regard of his great malice and power, and his being *in termino* or condemnd, thò not fully executed; whereas men are here only *in via* or probationers in reference to their future judgment) having accused *Job* falsely, and being by God extraordinarily permitted his pleasure on all he hath, for the tryal and exercise of this noble champion: begins with his estate, knowing *Job* would have valued that less if he had before lost his children; then destroys them allso suddenly, sparing the wife that was in his power, who it should seem was none of the best, for his second in this combat. And his friends knowing these things and seeing his bodily sufferings allso to be very great (althò the loss of his children seems his greatest outward affliction, his personal being greater in his inward troubles of spirit than bodily, for thò he was greivously sore and pained, yet not heart-sick or in dainger of death) they in stead of comforting him, add affliction to the afflicted, censure him as unrighteous, and think to prove him so by this argument, That he that is sorely afflicted of God is either an open sinner or secret hypocrite: this *Job* denies, and disputes it with them, and *Eliphaz* moderates, determining God's favor and afflictions to be consistent; which God confirms, and shews his displeasure against the others. Let this example of these good men's censoriousnes, keep us from playing the Criticks in such cases, and to judge nothing before the time either of God or men rashly, lest he deal with us after our folly: but stay till this dust that blinds us be blown out of our eyes, and then shall we see clearly the reason of all, at the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God. *Rom. 2. 5.*

§ For Application to those especially concern'd in the loss of their deare Relations, that they bear it Christianly. I need say the less of this, because many have said so much; tho the practise of most is not answerable, and especially those that are surprized. For the suddennes thereof discomposes our minds, makes us inconsiderate, and laying aside the rule both of scripture and reason comply with present sense: quarrelling with God, as *Jonah* for the loss of his guord,

guard, or any thing next us as the cause thereof, as *Job's* wife with her husband's religion, and the good widow with *Elijah* for the sudden death of her son, *1 Kings* 17. Briefly therefore. 1 Eye God as the author and orderer of all that befalls us. His sovereignty, power, goodness, justice, wisdom &c. in the kind, manner, measure, time and issue of afflictions. *David was dumb in silence, opened not his mouth in murmuring or complaining, because God did it. Ps. 39. 9. Peter looks only at Christ's enemies, and quarrels, Christ at God and submits to death: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it. J. b. 18. 11. If Epictetus could say, I have yielded my desires to God; how much more should we that are Christians* 2 Be sensible of thy sins, and deserts for them: so wilt thou more willingly accept, and better beare the punishment of them. *Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? Lam. 3. 39. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, saith the Church Micah. 7. 9. Those complain most that least know themselves and their sins.* 3 Compare our sufferings several ways, and we shall see small reason for impatience under them of what kind soever they be. As 1 with our sins. The Church complaind, *there was no sorrow like hers, yet after acknowledges it is of the Lord's mercies, that we are not consumed, and that our God hath punished us less than our iniquities deserve.* Which is true of the greatest punishments on this side hell. For if we had our desert, instead of weeping here for wives, or children, and as *Rachel will not be comforted because they are not*; we might be howling there in despaire, in a state for ever uncable of the least comfort. 2 With our enjoyments. Many mercies for one affliction: many spiritual mercies, for one temporal affliction. 3 With the suffering of others. What are any of ours to *Job's*, and many of God's best servants; whom he often strips not of one only, but of most or all their earthly comforts at once. If all men or especially God's people should bring their miseries together, and lay them in a common heap, none of us should have our share by much. 4 With the good we may gather by them. As to sins, for the discovering them to us; and making us search and try our wayes and turne again to the Lord. For the curing them in us: as security, pride, hypocrisie, worldlines, doting on creature comforts, unprofitableness under the means of grace, &c. And for the preventing sin from us: Which otherwise we should be apt to fall into, if God did not hedge up our way with

these thorns. So in reference to graces. Afflictions being as fire to refine and purify them: and make for the exercising, improving and quickening of them: as our faith, hope, love, zeale, patience, experience, humility, heavenly-mindednes, prayer &c. And in regard of more communion with God here, and more glory in heaven hereafter. The loss of friends is abundantly made up in more enjoyment of God: which his people experience frequently, who never enjoy him so much, as when they enjoy the creature least. May not Christ say, am I not better then all these? These all die away, but God and Christ remain the same. A good woman when her friends died, would often say; well, however my God lives: at length her husband dying, she lamented bitterly, that her child askt her, Mother is your God dead? at which she took up, blaming her self for her impatience. And the Apostle declares, *That our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us* (not meritoriously, but occasionally and instrumentally when sanctified) *a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* 2 Cor. 4. 17. 4 Let faith and patience have their perfect work in you. Faith in God through Christ and the promises for a holy use, and blessed effect of these sad providences: it being *He that teaches you to profit by them, making you partakers of his holiness, and them to yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness.* Patience to bear them aright, in a holy submission and compliance with Gods will, in the greatest crossnes of events, when you have rekoned comforts, and are arrested with sorrows. If the vertue of patience be as *Seneca* faith, *a salve for all soars*, much more the grace: which tho' it make not miseries none, yet keeps us from being miserable by them. In our duty it is good to doe that of choice, we must doe of necessity. Quarrel not therefore with God; for this is but like the wild and ignorant Indians, that shoot their arrows at the sun, when it scorches them, which fall back upon their own heads. Nor repine at his dealings; for this will but double the affliction, not remedy it. Say not, I could beare any cross but this. For you doe but deceive your self in this plea for your impatience, being most sensible of the present, having forgot former, and not knowing or much regarding future; as we are allways most sensible of the present weather. And were it so as you think, it is not for you to choose your own crosses, no more than your comforts. Check your selves, and indulge not impatience; which discomposes and unfits you for your duty both towards God and men; as we see in *Isaiah*, whose prayers in that

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temper are nothing but quarrelling with God. Be not so sinfully selfish as to wish them so much to their loss as to be with you again: who have finished their course, past the fears and pangs of death, left this troublesome world, and got rid of their sins and Satan's temptations, and crowned with righteousness in eternal life. Envy not the early happiness of thy wife, that is gone to a better husband; nor of thy child that is gone to his heavenly Father: But prepare thou to follow; and be with Christ and them in heaven, where there will be no more parting. Now that God by the clouds gathering so thick and black about us threatens us with a dreadful storm, we have reason to count them more than ordinary blest and happy, that are got safe home to their father's house, and those heavenly mansions, out of the reach of men or devils. God's smiting us out of these houses of clay, by these particular providences also, may and justly should make our eyes water; but not be filld with tears, or our hearts with sorrows too much, either in degree or duration for those gone before us; who might say to us as Christ to the daughters of *Jerusalem*, weep not for us but for your selves and your children, that are left behind in the days a coming in a troublesome world.

And that none should sorrow for this our sister, as others which have no hope; I might shew more largely, if I had known her longer. Who tho' taken from us in an hour we thought not, yet we have reason to believe neither unthought of nor unprepared for by her: not only in regard of the hazardous condition she knew she was to pass thorow, but the tenure of her life, which was vertuous and unblamable, her conversation having been answerable to her pious education. The certainty of death and uncertainty of the time is not more commonly said, than abused by the most; who in stead of being always ready because they know not the time, are less ready at all times; but the godly wise have not so learned Christ, who have been taught by him to watch, because they know not what hour he will come. To speak of that good in her, which she held in common with all other Christians, is needless. In these loose and declining times she kept her integrity: and was at more than ordinary pains, for the enjoyment of the publique ordinances, both in season and out of season, as God afforded opportunity. How should her early rising to them, shame most of us for our sloth, if we had any shame in us. She redeemed the time in these evil days for her private devo-

inordinately, & excessively spending it in pleasure; as too many do; but
 improving it for eternity, making God's word his compass and coun-
 sellor. Her converse and carriage was modest and prudent; guiding
 both her tongue, and affairs with discretion. Never speaking evil of
 any, or censoriously judging of others; as the unbridled and licentious
 tongues of many that run at random; who fear not to speak evil of dis-
 ciples, and spare not uncharitably to censure all; and often better than
 themselves, because they are not of their way. In brief, she was a *Mary*
 in God's house as well as a *Martha* in her own. Finally for her eternal
 salvation she was neither presumptuously confident, as the ignorant; nor
 fearfully diffident, as the unbelievers: but in a way of duty reposed her
 soul on God's mercy; and the merits of her Saviour, being wont to say,
she feared death, but not to be dead. Who seemed to be heard in that she
 feared, God removing death as it were out of her sight, by those apople-
 ctic or convulsive fits that seized on her and made her senseless, whereby
 death became less terrible to her at least, if it was any terror at all.
 And for a Christian sensible of sin, and future judgement, and eterni-
 ty, not to be afraid to be dead, is to me an argument of more than
 ordinary faith in Christ: and more than most of us I fear; if we were
 put to it, can truly say. For such a one as *Epicharmus* whom *Tully* *
 mentions, who neither believes the immortality of the soul or a future
 state, to say so, is no wonder; but for a Christian that believes both,
 is rare. Let's then comfort our selves, that she sleeps sweetly in Jesus;
 and get ready, that at what hour soever he shall call for us, we may
 not have our work to doe, and both fear death and to be dead; but
 may be fitted to give up our accounts with comfort, and be ever with
 the Lord.

*cl. L. A. Tuscul. Quest. Emcti nolo, sed me esse mortuum nihil affinis. q. di-
 citur mortem horreo, idque natura, vetum nobis fuere mortui, nihil amplius
 nos faciam, quia nullus ero. Pagnini Scholia.*

F I N I S.

